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[CAPTAIN WYNNE'S PERIL.]

THE MAID OF MONA.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XI.

CAPTAIN WYNNE'S PERILS AND DISCOVERIES.

Villains.

I know ye both! ye are slaves that for a ducent
Would rend the screaming infant from the breast,
To plunge it in the flames!

Matwin's Bertram.

Despite the utter exhaustion in which his injuries
had left him, Captain Wynne slowly recovered his
senses, lying in Maxley's bed room, where he had been
left to himself, in the dampness and darkness, at the
instance of the Countess of Rathsmere's arrival.

His first perceptions were confused, but by degrees
his thoughts acquired clearness, his pains quickening
his recollections.

He recalled his conflict with the smugglers, but all
that had since followed was a blank, save that he had
a vague impression of a menacing presence, of a light,
of voices, and of the other facts of Maxley's late asso-
ciation with him.

Extending his hand, it encountered bed-clothes, and
a further extension of it placed him in contact with
the wall of the room.

He comprehended that he was in a house, lying on
a bed, and instantly suspected that he had been a sub-
ject of friendly offices from some of the inhabitants of
the island.

He had not only been rescued from his perils, but
was among friends.

This gratifying reflection was instantly banished,
however, by the discovery that he was alone, in utter
darkness, unattended, and unaided.

He could not choose but ask himself what sort of
humanity it was that could leave him to his own re-
sources at such a moment.

His clothes were wet with spray and mist, his
wounds were painful with the gore clinging to them,
and a chilly exhaustion had penetrated to his very
veins, rendering him almost helpless.

Surely, no friendly or even humane person could

have treated him in that manner! Perhaps he had
been left to die?

As these gloomy suspicions entered his mind, he
arose to a sitting posture, and stared into the gloom
surrounding him, endeavouring to get some clue to his
whereabouts. The effort caused him the most exqui-
site pain, and brought him to a keen realisation of his
condition, convincing him that he was covered with
scratches and bruises, many of them of quite a serious
nature.

He saw no sign of life, and heard nothing beyond
the murmur of the wind around the dwelling, and
the sullen roar of the adjacent sea.

Where was he? How had he survived the rage
of the smugglers? Who had removed him from the
scene of the conflict with them? Why had he been
left to himself? To what further perils was he
exposed?

Not a clue to the answer of any of these press-
ing questions was afforded by either his sight
or hearing, as he thus looked around and listened.

The only certainty was, that he still lived, and
that he was awake, but what a horrible awaken-
ing!

It was some moments before he could move further,
and during this time he examined his wounds, assur-
ing himself that none of them were mortal, and also
deriving a theory as to their infliction that was not
far from the truth.

He concluded that the smugglers must have hurled
him from the cliff, but by what chance he had been
preserved, by whom rescued, and what might be his
present perils, he had not the slightest idea.

He knew from the rigidity of his wounds that
hours had passed since his encounter with his
enemies, and that the time could not be far from mid-
night.

"Alone, everybody a-bed, no one near me!" he
thought. "I must help myself, or perish!"

He struggled to his feet, and groped his way along
the wall, feeling for a door or other outlet.

He had not gone far before his hand came into
contact with a small shelf, on which were several
bottles. Among these was one containing brandy,

and he helped himself to a liberal draught, which at
once sent new life through every limb. His next step
was to feel for his pistol, which he found safe, and
with this discovery a good share of his strength seemed
to return to him.

Believing that he was still exposed to deadly perils,
he did not call for help, nor in any way announce that
he had recovered his senses.

In a minute or two, he found the door leading into
the kitchen, and this he cautiously opened, after as-
suring himself that there was no light in the dwelling
to betray his movements.

As dark as the night had become, he was able to
note where the windows were, the size of the room,
and some of the objects in it, including a large fire-
place, in which a few embers were visible, smoulder-
ing under the ashes.

A hasty survey of the apartment as he stepped into
it, closing the bedroom door behind him, brought an
ejaculation of surprise to his lips.

"It looks like Maxley's," he thought. "Can they
have carried me there?"

He hastened to uncover the few embers he had
noticed, and his impression respecting his whereabouts
was confirmed.

He had more than once visited the cottage during
his acquaintance with Mona, in the absence of her
father, and a look from the door upon the sea, the
neighbouring cottages, and other objects, convinced
him that he was at Maxley's.

"But how did it happen?" he ejaculated, aloud.
"Where is he? Where is Mona? Why is the house
so deserted? What means this mystery?"

His excitement, in connection with his weakness,
overpowered him for a moment, and he felt faint and
dizzy.

"Oh, if Mona were only here!" he gasped.
"Mona—Mona!"

His call was faint, but full of agony.

There was no answer, of course.

He had not recovered his senses until after Maxley
and the countess had departed, in the manner re-
corded, and the neighbours were too deeply locked in
sleep to hear him.

"Gone—all gone!" he sighed. "What can have happened? Where can they be?"

Groping about the room, he found a candle on a table, and, hastened to light it, and make a survey of the premises.

The result was, a conviction that he alone was in possession of the dwelling.

One of those tailless cats peculiar to the island emerged from the chimney corner, rubbing against his legs, and seeking recognition by purring, but no other sign of life met his notice.

"Strange—strange!" he exclaimed. "Why is the house thus deserted? Where can Mona be? Is it possible that she and her father have been carried off by the smugglers?"

The harrowing thought endowed him with renewed strength, and he hastened from the house, leaving his light on the table, and commenced a hurried search of the vicinity, going as far as the beach; but he saw nothing of the missing persons, and the mystery became more and more oppressive to him.

"Fearnought must have seized Mona!" he ejaculated. "Her father must have gone to look for her. How else account for this silence?"

Wearily with his exertions, he set out to return to the house, a prey to the most intense anxiety and anguish.

Ere he had reached it, however, a faintness, induced by his emotions, came over him, and he sank down at the foot of a small tree, becoming motionless and silent.

It seemed to him that scarcely a moment had passed when he heard footsteps in the path in front of the cottage, and a couple of men paused near him, with an air of secrecy and caution.

"What can that light in the kitchen mean, Faize?" demanded a voice, which he recognized as that of his enemy, whom he had encountered on the cliff. "Maxley said the house would be quite dark, and that Wynne would be completely helpless."

What a revelation there was in these few words for the listener! Maxley had plotted against him, and he had been left for the hand of the assassin! How fortunate it was that his search had led him out of doors!

"Praps Maxley forgot the light," responded, in a coarse and brutal voice, the man addressed as Faize. "He said he was off, so as to be out o' the way, didn't he?"

"Yes, he said he was going," answered Fearnought; "but I thought he was acting. Can it be that there was some concealed motive, some secret object, underlying his talk about a long absence, travelling on the continent, and all that?"

"I dare say," was the response. "He's a sly old fox, as I've often told you. Suppose—"

"Caution!" interrupted Fearnought, peering into the gloom around him. "We must be cautious! And we'll pay a visit to this youngster in the cottage. Cover your face, and the light will not harm!"

Faize muttered assent, and the two men stole noiselessly to the cottage.

What a moment was that for Captain Wynne! To know that the murderous outlaw who had so long avoided him, and who had done him such injury, was now seeking his life, and that he was unable to secure him, was a reflection full of the most galling bitterness.

For months and years he had been seeking to effect the smuggler's capture, and again and again had dreamed of the honours and rewards that would follow his success.

Not only were all these hopes unfulfilled, but his hunted enemy had turned upon him, and he himself was in quite as much danger as he had ever caused his formidable opponent.

It was startling for him to reflect that a cough, a movement, or any trifle of the kind, would bring the assassins upon him.

He even felt that it would be prudent for him to retreat, considering his weakness and the strength of his enemies.

While these emotions were passing in his mind, the two intruders, having reconnoitered the kitchen through a window, pushed open the door and entered, with the utmost caution.

Notwithstanding his peril, and a realisation of his weakness, as opposed to the strength of the two ruffians, the young captain left his concealment, with a curiosity superior to his apprehensions, and advanced in their steps, placing himself in a position to watch them.

"It's the bedroom to the left, Faize!" whispered Fearnought, as they paused in the centre of the room.

"Take the candle, and follow me. If the fellow's awake, he can't have much strength after that fall of his, and a child might manage him! Besides," he added, "if he had any weapons, Maxley took them, of course, as his perquisites. Come!"

Faize seized the light, and followed his master into the bedroom. He was a brutal-looking fellow, with a

bull neck and repulsive countenance, and was connected with his master by the strongest of ties—the tie of mutual wickedness. With hasty strides they reached the bedside, and the smuggler-chief, in his eager excitement, did not notice the emptiness of the bed before him till he had made several fierce thrusts in it.

"Eh, what's this?" he then exclaimed, in astonishment. "Hold your light! The fellow's gone!"

They looked at the deserted bed, and then blankly regarded each other. Their surprise had something comical in it, and Captain Wynne could not refrain from smiling.

"What can this mean?" cried Fearnought, looking around the chamber. "Can Maxley have played us false? More likely, the man's recovered his senses and vanished. Let's see if he's in the house!"

A hasty survey assured them that he was not. "Let's go outside," said the smuggler-chief. "He can't be far off. We may yet lay hands on him!"

Captain Wynne had barely time enough to conceal himself behind some bushes near at hand, when the two men extinguished the light and emerged from the dwelling.

Separating, one going on each side of the house, they made a hasty survey of the premises, as Captain Wynne had done before them.

Fearnought himself passed within a few feet of his enemy, who crouched in the darkness, pistol in hand; but this critical state of affairs lasted only a moment.

Rejoicing each other within a few steps of the captain, the two ruffians muttered their disappointment, and Fearnought declared:

"The fellow's escaped us, sure enough! Whether Maxley's tricked us, is a subject for future consideration. There was a queer agitation about him, I noticed, while he was talking of these matters. In any case, Wynne has vanished!"

"And that means that we shall soon hear from him," responded Faize. "It's a bad affair!"

"Bad enough," said Fearnought, in a tone of disappointment. "We shall have no peace while he's living. To-morrow we may have the whole revenue fleet cruising off shore, hemming us in, while a body of marines hunts us down on the island."

"Just so," commented Faize, gloomily. "No doubt he'll learn that the girl's in your keeping, and move heaven and earth to release her. Ah! what's that?"

He started, peering around him.

Captain Wynne had involuntarily moved at this allusion to the captive maiden.

Her strange disappearance was now made clear to him.

"Bah! you're nervous!" said Fearnought, with his usual careless laugh. "Let's go back to the house and wait an hour or two for the schooner. If she don't come, we'll have to call the boys together, and see what's to be done for our self-protection. Come!"

They went away in the direction from which they had come, and Captain Wynne followed them.

CHAPTER XII

PROJECTS AND COUNTER PROJECTS.

Away, then—work with boldness and with speed,
On greatest actions greatest dangers feed!

Marlow.

FEARNOUGHT and his attendant reached Ballacreeby in a few minutes, and noiselessly entered the house, without summoning a servant or showing a light. Captain Wynne followed near them, with calm persistence, his nerves strengthened by the consciousness of Mona's peril, and he was close behind them at the instant they reached their destination and vanished from his sight.

His surprise at this result was intense. "The estate is owned and occupied by a man named Dean," he thought, as he paused near the steps in the midst of the shrubbery bordering the path. "Can it be that he is concerned with the smugglers? I have not heard a word against him, but it must be that he associates with them."

A tremour of emotion shook his frame, as he reflected that Mona, being in Fearnought's power, might be at that very instant within a few yards of him.

"How can I communicate with her?" was his mental inquiry. "How rescue her from this villain?" The task was so full of difficulties that he could not think of it with anything like calmness.

Suddenly he heard footsteps approaching, and had barely time to crouch behind the shrubbery before a man came hurrying up the walk, ascended the steps, and knocked for admittance.

A moment passed, and Fearnought made his appearance, it being his custom to wait upon the door himself on such occasions. He did not bear any light, and it was only by the movement of the door that his presence was revealed.

"Is it you, captain?" asked the new comer.

"Yes. What is wanted?"

"Lieutenant Guiffers sent me. We've returned

with the schooner. She's safe in Port Erin, according to your orders, sir."

"Oh, it's you, Duff!" exclaimed Fearnought, stepping forth and shaking hands with the visitor. "I did not expect to see you so soon. Is the schooner loaded?"

"Your orders have been fully carried out, sir." The smuggler-chief expressed his approval of those assurances very emphatically, and called Faize from the interior of the house to rejoice with him.

"My word for it, we'll soon make our revenue friends open their eyes," he declared. "When we were obliged to leave the Sea Spider, the other night, taking to the boats, I then and there resolved that our next venture should surpass all our former ones. Accordingly, as you know, I sent the lieutenant to our retreat, telling him to return with our best vessel, and with a cargo of our most valuable goods. This he has done, and we will at once join him and leave the island."

Captain Wynne comprehended these observations readily.

He perceived that the late losses of Fearnought had not intimidated him, but merely inspired him with a resolve to retrieve them.

The extent of Fearnought's resources was revealed by the fact that he could send for another vessel of losing one, and that he had secret hauls, where whole cargoes of goods awaited an opportunity of being transhipped into England.

"As you see, Duff," added the smuggler-chief, turning to the messenger. "I am glad you have been so prompt and fortunate. You could not have arrived at a more opportune moment. Hurry back to Lieutenant Guiffers, and tell him that there are a few things in the barn to be taken aboard the schooner. They are things that were left in the cave from our last cargo. The boys have been taken to the barn to-night, and we must remove them now or never. It's a question when I come back here, if ever. That confounded Wynne has as many lives as a cat, and he's returned again on the look out for us. He'll doubtless be in communication with his vessels by morning, and will track the island from one end to the other. For these reasons, Duff, tell the lieutenant to take off everything he can carry. Tell him to hurry. I shall be down immediately!"

The man replied briefly, and hurried away as rapidly as he had come.

"And now, Faize," added Fearnought, turning to his follower, "go to the cave, and tell the boys to vacate it as soon as possible. Let them leave nothing behind them. By to-morrow night we can be off the English coast, near Southport, and land our cargo before these revenue fellows are certain that we have left the island!"

"The coast near Southport?" repeated Faize, reflectively. "That'll enable me to run home, perhaps, and see the old woman."

"Of course—if we land our cargo without trouble," answered Fearnought. "But hurry to tell the boys at the cave, and bring them over to the schooner!"

Faize hastened to obey, and turning away from his leader and descending the steps, was soon lost to the view of Captain Wynne, going in the direction of the Head.

"Nothing could be better!" commented Fearnought with a chuckle. "We shall be off in time to avoid all peril, as well as to run an immense cargo, and the girl shall go with me!"

With this he re-entered the house.

The situation of affairs was now sufficiently clear to our hero. Mona was in the hands of Fearnought.

With a celerity inspired by his anguish, the young officer reviewed every possible course of action open to him.

He would remain where he was, pistol in hand, if Fearnought should reappear, conducting Mona to his vessel; but if the pistol should miss fire, if the villain should have shot him, or if he should leave the house by another door, this course of action would be fruitless.

As to getting help on the island, or opening communication with his vessels in time to intercept Fearnought's departure, that was out of the question.

"How to save her?" he mused. "How to keep these rascals under notice?"

A thought seemed to strike him—a daring and dangerous purpose—for a stern exclamation of satisfaction escaped him, and his form acquired a sudden elasticity and vigour, as he turned and hurried away. His manner was that of a man who is resolved to succeed or die!

The gloom, the murmurs of the wind, the roughness of his path, the grim solitude of the place at the hour, and all the features of the scene, were heeded.

As rapidly as the nature of the ground would permit, he hurried towards his hiding-place at the Head, passing across broken and stony fields, beneath desolate

of all verdure save a few stunted shrubs and bushes, and low ledges of rocks whereon he was obliged to feel his way step by step. Continuing to advance, despite all the dangers and obstacles in his way, he at length descended into a deep & sure among the cliffs, and thence proceeded to his retreat.

It was, as he had stated to Mona, an almost inaccessible cave, opened into the base of one of the cliffs, and entirely shut out from observation both by land and sea.

Here the captain paused and listened. Voices reached his hearing, and a slight disarrangement from within of a screen at the mouth of the cave permitted a few rays of light to reach him.

"I thought I heard a step," said a voice.

The captain entered.

The cave was small and irregular, yet large enough for the use to which it was devoted. A little couch occupied one corner, and some boxes and hampers, backed by a couple of camp-chairs, were the only other articles of furniture.

Several men, including a lieutenant, were seated in the cave at the instant of the captain's appearance, and they sprang excitedly to their feet, greeting him with a volley of ejaculations and inquiries, appearing to be startled by his pale face and evident weakness.

"Peace, men," he said. "All goes well. I am glad to find you waiting."

"We've been here for hours," rejoined the lieutenant. "We came ashore soon after nightfall, for we should not be able to effect a landing at the bay agreed upon—at midnight. What has happened?"

"A few events, I will discuss with you. Let the men go back to the boat, and be in readiness to leave the island. Walk with me a few minutes, lieutenant, and I will tell you my intentions and wishes. Let them take my luggage away with them."

CHAPTER XIII.

MONA AND HER OPPRESSOR.

In the flash of her glances were passion and pride, in the curve of her lip there was haughty contempt.

Mrs. Osgood.

"Goes to the continent?" repeated Mona, in astonishment and wonder, when the door had closed behind the retreating forms of Maxley and Fearnought. "What did he mean? Why should he go to-night? and why should he desert me?"

A look of scorn mantled her sweet face, and her eye flashed with indignation.

Her attitude, the slightest glance of her eye, would have been sufficient to tell the two men that their proud conduct was having an effect upon her they had not anticipated, inspiring her with anger and scorn, instead of overwhelming her with fear and the humility that waits upon it.

"How likely that Fearnought has bought his consent to our marriage," she resumed; "and he is going to squander himself with the money. Or, do they think a child to be frightened by threats of abandonment, or by a few hours of solitude? Do they really suppose that I will accept this monster as my husband? No! will in some way discover what they are doing!"

She proceeded to examine her prison minutely, looking for some unguarded spot, for some evidence of weakness. It was very secure, with oaken paneling, and a heavy door, and the solitary window being at considerable height from the ground.

As Mona continued her investigation, she became convinced that the room had been a nursery in the days of the previous occupant, iron bars being fastened securely in the casement, and resisting all her efforts at disengagement.

"Useless," she sighed, relinquishing the attempt. "The room is as strong as a prison. I must try some other plan."

She was thoughtful, reflecting that the dwelling had been for years unused, that it stood apart from the village and quite alone in the midst of its estate, and that it was late at night, and, therefore, if she were to stand at the window and call for help, she would be simply waiting her breath.

She turned over in her mind every possible plan of escape, and was finally yielding to despair when the thought suggested an idea—she might possibly burn herself out.

Without pausing to consider the danger she would incur by this procedure, and with a wild prayer for success, she hastened to pile the chairs together near the door, and then applied the candle to their stuffed seats.

The smoke that resulted was almost suffocating. Gasping for breath, and in despair at her non-success, she quenched the fire she had kindled by throwing on it the contents of a water-pitcher, and then sat down in silence.

The time passed by unheeded by Mona, who be-

came absorbed in her painful thoughts, and the candle burned low and began to flicker, when at last a key grated in the lock, the door opened, and Fearnought entered.

His manner was exuberant, and he rubbed his hands together in a jubilant sort of way, as he kicked the door to behind him.

"Smoke!" he ejaculated, sniffing the air. "A fire, eh?"—and he regarded the burned chairs—"and water?" he added, as his feet sank into the wet carpet. "Well, I must say you have all the elements here except earth. And so you think to set the house on fire?" and he laughed. "I declare you've got more spirit than I gave you credit for, my dear. You are fit to be a smuggler's bride, and assist in commanding lawless souls!"

Mona made no reply, regarding him with a look of aversion.

He examined the injury done to the furniture in a manner that showed he was more pleased than angered at Mona's demonstration, and then he drew an easy chair to the girl's side, and said:

"I like your determined temper better than the diavaway, weeping, fainting, sort of women, my pretty Mona, and I take your opposition as an augury of our future happiness. As is the duty of a wooer, I have come up here to tell you something about myself and my plans. You have heard, I presume, how I was pursued and driven ashore here five days ago, by the revenue fleet? I see you have. It was easy for me to hide upon this island. It is over two years since I purchased the estate of Ballacreeby, and during that period I have spent considerable time here, unknown to any one save my faithful friends. It was during those visits that I encountered and learned to love you, fair Mona—the belle of the island."

Mona's countenance did not relax at this compliment, and he proceeded;

"I have many friends here and many assistants, so that I feel quite at home on the island. And then I flatter myself that not every one would detect the dreaded Fearnought in the quiet Mr. Dean! So, while the revenue men have spent the last five days in scouring the adjoining coasts for me, I have been eating my roast beef at Ballacreeby, quietly ignoring their existence. It was easy for me to come hither in the darkness succeeding their attack upon my vessel, and it has been easy for me to keep my men concealed in the cave, where you fortunately stumbled upon them!"

"But your good fortune will not last for ever," declared Mona, remembering her lover's presence on the island. "Justice will yet have its due."

"It will be some time first," responded Fearnought, with a laugh. "And while justice, in the person of Captain Wynne, is looking for me, I purpose being out of its reach. The fact is, charming Mona, after landing here, I sent some of my men off in a fishing-sloop to bring hither a schooner of mine, and that schooner arrived to-night. The winds are favourable enough for my purpose, and I leave Man to-night. Of course, you'll go with me?"

"Oh, no! no!" cried Mona, pleadingly, "I cannot go. I beg you to leave me! Have pity, I beseech you!"

Fearnought regarded her with a look of admiration.

"What a little chameleon she is!" he said, mockingly. "One minute she is like a tigress, and would set the house on fire, at the risk of burning herself up, and then she is sullen and disdainful, and now she pleads like a devotee. Well, all this is better than too much sameness. No, my pretty Mona," he added, "you only injure yourself by opposing me. While you act in this manner, I am your master. Make up your mind to accept your inevitable destiny, and you may lead me with a silken string."

"Is there not one spark of pity, one sentiment of justice, in your breast?" moaned the girl.

Fearnought laughed.

"I'd like to take your picture," he said, "with that look upon your face, to show it to you a few weeks or months hence, when you will be absorbed in silks and laces. We'd have a world of merriment over it. I have no further time to spend in this manner. We must be off. You shall see the world and life—real life! No honest man is abroad at this time of night!"—and he laughed again—"so you cannot summon any gallant defender. Get ready."

"If you are taking me hence with the idea of gaining my love!" exclaimed Mona, "you are making a false move. I hate and despise you! I'd sooner be eaten by sharks than be your wife!"

Her spirited air and flashing eyes gave force to her words, but to Fearnought they were cause for merriment.

"Anything else?" he asked.

"Only this—Captain Wynne will be upon your track, and will not fail to arrive at a settlement of difficulties with you!"

"Then it behoves me to start immediately," said Fearnought, with mock anxiety. "Allow me to assist you!"

Mona had not removed her hood and cloak, and her companion, with an authoritative air, wrapped his costly shawl around her—the same she had worn from the cave—and led her down stairs into the lower corridor, and thence into the open air.

"Take my arm!" he said, in a tone that demanded obedience. "That's right. You see how late it is. Everybody's abed and asleep. Not a light is to be seen. Resistance would be perfect folly, as your judgment must tell you. The only persons in the vicinity who are awake are my faithful men, and I dare say you wouldn't want to summon them!"

Mona felt the truth of these observations, and walked on in silence.

The night had grown wild since Mona's late walk with Fearnought, and was now as gloomy as her feelings. The wind blew fresher and freer, and as they approached Port Erin they heard the solemn moaning of the restless waves.

Fearnought's spirits grew higher and higher as they advanced, the prospect of a storm just suiting his strange, lawless nature; but as they came near the beach he said little, and seemed on the watch for his friends.

They finally halted, quite near the water, and the smuggler uttered a low whistle.

"Here, sir, here!" said a voice beside him, although he could not distinguish the speaker in the gloom. "The boat is ready, and two of us are in it!"

Fearnought thrust out his hand in the direction of the voice, and then led Mona into the boat, following her and seating himself by her side. The boat was then pushed off, and the men rowed silently away into the darkness.

A dark outline soon loomed up in the gloom, and they found themselves alongside the smugglers' vessel. Fearnought mounted, assisting Mona to the deck, where the men were working as silently as possible, lowering boats, attending to the rigging, etc., and led her to the cabin, where there was a dim light shining from a dark lantern. The small port-holes were covered with their dead-lights and carefully draped with padded curtains, through which not a ray of light could penetrate. Boxes and bales of costly goods nearly filled the room, leaving but a small space to move about. Into this cabin, Fearnought thrust the girl, saying:

"You will be safe here, sweet Mona. As you are so cruel as to wish to escape, I must look you in. I'll come in to see you as soon as we have left the island fairly behind us. Make yourself comfortable!"

With a triumphant smile he withdrew, locking her in, and hastened to the deck.

CHAPTER XIV.

FEARNUGHT'S VENTURE—AND OUR HERO'S.

Then little know'st
What he can brave, who, born and nurt
In Danger's paths, has dared her worst!
Upon whose ear the signal-word
Of strife and death is hourly breaking;
Who sleeps with head upon the sword
His fevered hand must grasp in waking.

Mora.

Just to the eastward of Port Erin, on the sandy point defining the southern outline of the harbour, had stood, from time immemorial, at the period of which we write, an old barn of very ordinary aspect. It was the property of a humble fisher named Jacobs, and stood upon a piece of ground which had been occupied by his ancestors for untold generations, but the family residence had been burned down years ago, and the barn had been left standing by itself, honest Jacobs not having found time or money to rebuild the cottage.

And here the old barn had remained from year to year, growing old in its solitude, and generally considered to be of little account to its owner or any one else.

In this, however, as in various other ways, the majority of the inhabitants of the port were mistaken.

For the honest Jacobs had, at an early period of his career, been initiated into the mysteries of the contraband trade, and, noting that the barn was near the water, as well as in a retired spot, he had found it to his interest to make it a hiding-place and general receptacle of contraband goods.

What sights it had seen during the years of active use that had followed!

Beneath the floor there were spacious vaults, generally stocked with goods that would have ornamented a palace, and behind its rude doors, with their leather hinges, there were many a secret passageway and many a secret staircase, of which only those who toiled in the ranks of the free-traders had any knowledge.

In this place a scene worthy of attention was transpiring.

The rough flooring in the centre of the barn had been removed, disclosing stout vaults and staircases, and a score of men were as busy as bees, hoisting up bales and boxes, taking them out of doors to the beach, and removing them by boats to a schooner which had lately dropped anchor in the harbour.

This was the business Fearnought had commended to the care of his lieutenant.

The proceedings were in full course, when a figure coming stealthily from the port, approached the barn unseen, wrenched a loose piece of board from its side, and proceeded to survey the interior of the building, its contents, and its busy occupants.

This intruder was Captain Wynne.

"I say, lieutenant," said one of the men, wiping his forehead, after depositing an enormous package on the floor, "wouldn't them ere revenue spies like to pounce on us now? They little suspect what kind o' hoozes are in this 'ere barn!"

A general laugh greeted this observation.

"Keep still, boys," said a petty officer, admonishingly. "We are getting pretty well cleared out. Ain't that cellar about empty? It took us two nights to bring the goods here, but it mustn't take us an hour to carry them aboard. Who's that at the door?" he added, as a low and peculiar knock was heard at the entrance.

A peculiar whistle answered him.

"It's one of our men," he said. "Douse your glims, boys, and open the door!"

The lanterns were quickly hidden under protecting jackets, so that no light could stray outside on opening the door; and the new comer was then admitted, the entrance secured, and the lanterns produced.

"Lieutenant Guffers!" exclaimed his subordinate in command. "You see we're hard at it."

"Glad to see it," was the response. "The captain's come off, and wants you to hurry up. The goods must be aboard immediately."

"All right!" replied the petty officer. "Hand up the rest o' them bales, boys."

As he spoke, he drew a bottle from a hamper half-concealed by a cloud of filmy lace that had fallen upon it, and dexterously beheaded it by dashing its neck against a barrel near, then offered it to the lieutenant, who took a liberal supply of it.

"Wouldn't our revenue friends like a drink o' that, free o' duty?" he demanded, after he had finished the bottle. "I say, boys," he added, perceiving a look of dissatisfaction on his comrades' faces, "that 'ere hamper is part of my private venture. I bought it myself. All ready?"

They answered in the affirmative, coming up out of the now empty cellar, and restoring the flooring to its former condition.

"Out with the lights, then," said Guffers, "and carry the rest of the goods to the boats!"

The lights were extinguished, the door opened, and the men took the remainder of the goods out of doors, closing the barn securely.

Now was the time for Captain Wynne to act!

He had resolved to mingle with his enemies, and smuggle himself aboard of their vessel!

Watching his opportunity, he stole from his concealment, seized one of the remaining boxes of goods, and carried it to one of the boats in waiting. Two or three times did he repeat this performance before all the goods were removed, and then he boldly placed himself in one of the boats, in the midst of the smugglers.

"Thank fortune, we've found the last of 'em!" said Guffers, preparing to push off. "There's too much wind and sea for this business. Look out, boys, all of you!"

The boats pushed off, one after another, and proceeded towards the schooner, not without much difficulty, owing to the violence of the wind and the roughness of the water.

Captain Wynne had seized an oar, and took such an active part in the proceedings that he would have avoided all notice, even if his companions had not been too busy to pay any attention to him.

In a brief space of time the dark hull of the schooner became visible in the gloom, the boats ran alongside, and the goods were removed to the deck and stowed away in the hold, while a part of the boats were packed away, on the quarters and amidships, and the rest sent ashore.

"Get under way, lieutenant," said Fearnought, as soon as the task of stowing away the goods was finished. "Send all ashore that are going, and let's be off before the wind gives us trouble!"

The sails were instantly set, the anchor raised, and the schooner immediately began to move seaward rapidly.

Fearnought stood upon the deck, his eyes shining with jubilant expression, as he turned his face towards the island they were fast leaving, and exclaimed:

"Well, we've stolen a march on our enemies."

With a ship well filled with silks and satins, and with a bonny bride in my cabin to cheer my loneliness, I can afford to bid adieu to the island."

Captain Wynne, who had stowed himself behind one of the boats amidships, could not help but smile bitterly, on listening to the smuggler's observations.

"Perhaps the game is all in your hands," he thought to himself, as he peered cautiously forth upon his enemy; "but perhaps it isn't! The question remains to be settled!"

(To be continued.)

THE SHEIKH OF THE DESERT.

CHAPTER I.

In the heart of the desert lay one of the greenest oases that ever refreshed the eye of any wandering Howadji who roamed the vast, sandy wastes stretching away almost illimitably from horizon to horizon.

Tall palms flung their shadows athwart the green sward; clusters of date trees, laden with fruit, kept sentinel at the outer verge where grass and sand blended together; a pool spring bubbled up with a welcome, gushing sound, and a circle of tents comprised the encampment of a tribe, whose chief was noted for his fierce and warlike prowess—Ben Hadad, the Sheikh of the Desert—of wide renown through all the region round.

Many and bitter were the feuds between the rival tribes; and to secure the alliance of Ben Hadad and his trained Arab horsemen was esteemed of great importance; even the great Caliph of Bagdad had, once upon a time, sent a courier to treat with the sheikh, in order to secure his allegiance; but Ben Hadad was proud and independent as he was powerful, and he returned an answer so haughty and cool, that the great Caliph took umbrage thereat, hence the bitter enmity that henceforward lay between them. For it suited the bold Ben Hadad better, to remain chief of a free, wandering tribe, than become a mere vassal and helper of any monarch; thus he could well afford to laugh at the Caliph's threats of revenge for the contumely with which his offer had been treated.

It was in the cool of a summer's day, that the sheikh galloped over the desert, on his homeward way to his tent.

His mettled Arab barb, of the purest blood, and snowy white as sea foam, was richly caparisoned with a saddle and trappings of scarlet and gold; and the powerful figure of the old sheikh, in the loose dress, ample turban, and richly wrought scarf of the east, with the long, white beard falling like an ample snow-drift on his breast, imparted a majestic and patriarchal air to his appearance.

Onward dashed Selim, with carvetting, prancing steps, till his master drew rein at the encampment under the palm and date trees; and, springing from his saddle, Ben Hadad gave his horse into the hands of one of his servants, and entered a tent which stood at a little distance from the others, and at one extremity of the semi-circle in which they were built around the cool bubbling spring.

This tent, larger and more pretentious than its neighbours, was of camel's-hair cloth, and open at the sides to admit the cool evening wind.

Upon a rug near the entrance, sat a young and beautiful girl, with those wondrously soft, lambent eyes, and the creamy olive complexion of the loveliest daughters of the orient—and long, rich plaits of silky black hair coiled under the soft, fleecy veil of Syrian muslin which she wore.

At the sheikh's appearance, the girl's face had brightened with an expression of filial love; and, as he entered the tent, she sprang to her feet, removed the ribbon of a rebes from whose chords she had been eeking some wild Moorish melody, and, after bestowing a greeting upon her sire, turned away to give orders to a group of women in an adjoining tent, for the preparation of the evening meal.

Soon, evidences of cookery appeared; and when all was in readiness, the old sheikh exclaimed:

"Where is our guest, Xarifa? Summon him to the evening feast!"

In obedience to this command, with wonderful alacrity Xarifa approached a small tent near by—one also removed from the others—and lifting its door, spoke a few words to its occupant, a handsome, but pale young man, who immediately issued forth and joined the old sheikh in his tent.

Seated on rich rugs from Persian looms, the old man and his companion were served by Xarifa and her maidens. Delicious milk-curd, bread, wild-honey, dates, pomegranates, cherries, and sweet wine from the distant Syrian vineyards constituted the feast; and, when that was finished, pipes filled with perfumed tobacco were brought, and the twain removed to the tent door, where they sat and smoked till the wreaths curled whitely up into the soft, gray, twilight air.

"Then thou leavest us with the morrow, Sid Norman?" asked the sheikh, after listening to some information his companion had imparted as they sat side by side. "Art thou grown strong enough to return to thine own people? That was an ugly lance-wound thou hadst gotten in thy side when I found thee, almost dying, near my encampment, and bore thee hither; and 'twere best it were wholly healed ere thou goest forth from my tents, Sid Norman."

"Believe me, I am now strong again, although the pallor that follows illness may yet mark my cheek!" replied the young man. "Full long have I lingered here; and now, Ben Hadad, I must return to my own people, carrying hence a warm memory of thy hospitality. Some day, perhaps, it may be in my power to return that hospitality of to reward it. Thou and thine wilt not be forgotten, Ben Hadad!" and the young man spoke warmly.

"Ben Hadad asks no reward!" said the old sheikh proudly. "Were his greatest enemy, the Caliph of Bagdad, to be wounded at his tent door, he would not thrust him away, but bind up his bruises—for an Arab will not turn a hurt dog from his door,—how much more, then, would then be cared for! Nor wilt thou be forgotten, either, Sid Norman!" and he laid his hand with almost paternal kindness on the young man's arm. "The old man's thought will often turn to the young warrior who lay in his tent and tasted salt at his table—and may the blessing of Allah follow thee evermore, my son!" and he raised his hands over the handsome young head, in benediction.

Lifting his bowed head, young Sid Norman turned to catch a glimpse of a face paler than his own, shrinking back in the shadows the date-tree flung deep over the tent-door; and he knew that Xarifa, his host's beautiful daughter, had overheard the news he had imparted to her father. And, as he turned away to his tent, he mused painfully over the necessity which bore him away from that charmed spot in the desert, where love had gushed as freely in his heart as the water in the mossy spring.

"She loves me! Xarifa, star of the desert, whose lily fingers have bathed my wounds, and whose eyes have pierced my heart, will grow sad when I am gone. Shall I breathe unto her a love far greater than her own?" murmured Sid Norman, as he sat alone in his tent-door, with the evening shadows shrouding tents, trees, fountain, and browsing camels more deeply. "Shall I whisper the tale of love, and list to her soft accents before I depart—or shall I wait in patience, to win a more glorious reward?"

The night passed; the morrow came; and Sid Norman had departed, with his love for the beautiful Xarifa unconfeined.

CHAPTER II.

A YEAR had circled round, since the young stranger whom Xarifa's white hands had nursed into health, departed from her father's tent; and no tidings had ever come to her from him, out of the great world to which he had returned.

That little episode was the one green oasis in the Arab girl's existence.

Musical, sweeter than the soft breeze sighing through the date trees or the bubbling sound of the fountain, she had heard in the accents of his voice; and thenceforth her life was tame and objectless, and she grew restless to escape from the monotony of her desert home.

During the weeks when the young stranger had been her father's guest, Xarifa had learned a heart lesson she would never more forget; and though the pride which she had inherited from her sire forbade its betrayal, save what Sid Norman read in her paling cheek, yet she could not bring herself to accept the lot of wife to any of the brave young warriors of her tribe who would gladly have sued for her hand.

So the sheikh's daughter remained in her father's tent, passing the hours of his absence in embroidering cloth of camel's hair, and murmuring old Moorish melodies to her rebo— and at her sire's return, in performing for him the countless little attentions of a tender and loving child—while over the tissue of love's golden thread was woven into her being, and the soft, sweet music of her romantic dream kept flushing through her rhymes.

All this time, the old sheikh, Ben Hadad, had been busier than of old with his feuds and frays. Attaching to himself several powerful tribes, he had openly defied the Caliph, roamed through the desert, lord of the region, and most feared of all the chieftains who had revolted from the government.

Ben Hadad had not been incited to this by any new act of opposition from the Caliph; but, daily growing more powerful, and nursing his old feud, he became more open in his defiance, and it was the ambition of his heart to be able to boast that, Ben Hadad, a sheikh of the desert, could cause the Caliph of Bagdad to tremble on his throne.

But in the midst of these warlike expeditions came a message of strange import to Ben Hadaad. Two couriers from Bagdad arrived at his encampment, bearing a proclamation from the Caliph in this wise:

"Let Ben Hadaad the sheikh lay down his arms, and come up to Bagdad—let him bring thither also his beautiful daughter Xarifa, the fame of whose starry eyes and milk-white skin has reached the great city of the Caliph, and who would straightway be given in marriage to a mighty noble of the court. Let Ben Hadaad do this, swearing fealty for ever henceforth to the government, and all past offences shall be blotted out from the great Caliph's remembrance, even as the prophet had promised to blot out the sins of the faithful as he received them into Paradise."

So proclaimed the couriers to Ben Hadaad, as they sat in his tent in the cool of the day, and strained their eyes to catch a glimpse of the beautiful Arabian maiden, whose charms were reputed to rival the beauties of whom is made mention in their sacred Koran; and Ben Hadaad heard them in silence, then summoned his maid-servants to place food before them, and ordered mats whereon they might repose their limbs, weary with the long journey from Bagdad—then retired to revolve this strange communication in his mind, and to lay the Caliph's message before his daughter.

"What word sends my Xarifa to the great Caliph of Bagdad?" was the old sheikh's question on the morrow, when the messengers announced themselves ready to set out on their homeward journey.

The maiden looked long and anxiously into her sire's face, as if fearing to anger him by her reply, for she had imagined that his ambition might prompt an acceptance of the tempting proposition. But her own nature revolted from the thought of this mercenary marriage; and her heart was too secure in its first allegiance to permit her to entertain a thought favourable to this noble Bagdad lover.

"It may grieve the heart of her sire, and thwart his plans of reconciliation with a great and powerful monarch, but Xarifa cannot take this strange noble for her lord. Let the Caliph ask anything but this. It would be his slave, if need be; but I cannot sit in the tent of a stranger. Answer, my father, and say if thy Xarifa hath spoken wisely or foolishly!" and she stood before him with downcast mien.

For a moment it would have been thought that the old sheikh was wroth, so vivid a red flamed into his swart cheek, and so keen a flash lit his dark eyes beneath his overhanging bushy brow; but when he spoke, Xarifa's heart gave a great bound of relief and joy.

"My daughter is a true child of her sire. Like him, she will not be bought with fair promises and tales of greatness. She shall not go to sit in the tent of a stranger, but he, the Caliph himself, on his throne of porphyry and gold—nor will Ben Hadaad exchange his title, 'The Great Sheikh of the Desert,' for that of Prime Vizier. Go tell thy master who dwells in the tent by the palm-tree on the brink of the fountain that reigns in Bagdad!" and, dismissing the couriers with a wave of his hand, the old sheikh called to his horse Selim, and dashed away from his encampment; leaving his daughter to watch the departure of the messengers, and wonder if Sid Norman were thought of, in that same great world whither they were returning.

CHAPTER III.

The long summer had passed, the kingly palm had shed its kindest glossy green coronet, the dates had ripened and been gathered; but the bubbling fountain still sang its elden merry tune, for it had not failed with summer heats, and now gushed up with the more healthily flow in the pleasant days when the fervid heats were fading.

The caravan, winding its sinuous length across the desert, had halted beside the oasis spring, while the nomads browsed the cool green herbage, then it wound away again on its pilgrimage; and Xarifa, the Arabian maiden, had looked on the ripening dates, listened to the pleasant flow of the desert spring, and watched the caravan trailing away across the sand, wondering why, for her, the ripe date had lost its savour, and the cool spring its music tone, and if her vague, restless, longing heart might not find peace in the great busy world whither the caravan was going. More and more every day was she dissatisfied with the lonely tent under the palm-tree, and though she had returned to purchase her freedom by a palace service, her thoughts were often turned to the great city which lay beyond the horizon's purple rim. But sad, uncontented thoughts often mingled with her musings. This handsome young stranger would come no more from his distant home. He had long ere this forgotten the maiden of the desert, and she reproached herself with having given her love unsought to one who prized the gift so lightly.

What, then, was Xarifa's joy when, seated one evening in a deep reverie upon her mat in the tent-door, with her rebel lying silent in her lap, to hear her name spoken in a tone whose music had never died from her ears, and she sprang up to bestow a blushing welcome upon Sid Norman!

But, this time, the young stranger came not alone to the encampment in the desert; a retinue of twelve attendants accompanied him; and, as Xarifa gave orders to her sire's servants for their entertainment and the care of their horses, she noticed one small Arabian palfrey of purest white, with ebony-black mane and fetlocks, which seemed fitter for a woman's riding than any of those swarthy strangers.

With the setting sun, Ben Hadaad came dashing homeward across the sand; and he sprang from his saddle to bestow a warm, fatherly greeting upon his guest.

"Welcome, Sid Norman, son of my heart!" he exclaimed, embracing him. "Thou hast not forgotten the old man, who found thee wounded by fierce Bedouin robbers, and bore thee to his humble tent. The sight of thy young face, ruddier than when thou departed from us last year, is like oil to my gladdened soul—and thy smile is like sunlight to the eyes that have longed continually for thy presence!" and, turning from his guest, the old sheikh gave orders for the choicest food to be brought forth for his refreshment.

The evening meal over, and the amber pipes smoked, the young guest turned to his host, and spoke of that which had impelled his journey thither.

"Sid Norman has never forgotten the weeks when he tarried at this little Paradise in the heart of the desert, nor the lily fingers that bound up his wounds, and the eyes that made starlight for his life. He now returns, to kneel at the feet of the lovely Xarifa, if the consent of her sire be not denied him."

The eyes of the old sheikh flashed with sudden joy. This young man had won his heart during those weeks of convalescence; and he had but to ask his daughter's hand, to become his son by adoption, as he had been long before by affection.

"The blessing of Ben Hadaad be upon thee, my son!" was the reply. "Thou hast shown respect for the old man, by asking his consent ere thou conferrest with his daughter. Now, seek Xarifa, and if the maiden willingly goes to share thy tent, she is thine! I know not thy rank or estate, Sid Norman; but Ben Hadaad never yet met deceit from those in whom his heart put faith; and I trust thee wholly—and bid Allah speed thee in thy wooing!"

With a smile upon his handsome, bearded lips the young man left the side of the sheikh, and sought Xarifa.

In the tender moonlight, that shed its silver rain over the white desert-sands and the green oasis, with its tall palms, and picturesque, clustering tents, he found the Arab maiden lingering by the brink of the cool fountain under the shadows of the date-trees. Xarifa had thrown the fleecy Syrian muslin veil from her beautiful face; and the evening wind bathed her soft olive cheek, and brought to her ear the hasty impetuous step of her lover as he neared the fountain.

What impassioned utterances and gently whispered responses were breathed there, under the bosky shadows and chiming in with the soft flow of the waters, were, mayhap, imagined by the white-bearded old sheikh, sitting in his tent door, and letting his thoughts stray backward to his own long-past youth when he wooed and won a gazelle-eyed Arab maid—his Xarifa's mother—gone years since to her seat in Paradise; and when, an hour later, the twain knelt at his feet to receive his blessing the strong sinewy hands so used to clasp the scimitar in warfare, trembled as they were laid upon the bowed heads of the handsome young Sid Norman and his raven-tressed Xarifa.

"I will go with thee to sit in thy tent among thine own people!" had been the decision of the Arab maiden; and now Xarifa commenced her preparations to depart from the home of her girlhood.

With caressing hand she stroked the snowy palfrey whose sleek beauty she had so admired on the evening when Sid Norman had come to the encampment; and a bright loving smile wreathed her lips as she thought of the journey she should soon make seated in that little saddle, decked so richly with cloth of gold and scarlet. And, with all an Arab maiden's love of finery, she admired the beautiful fabrics which Sid Norman had brought as presents for his bride—costly silks from Damascus, veils of exquisite embroidery, sandals wrought by most cunning fingers, and jewels so rich in their golden setting that their price must have been most princely.

One pleasant morning, the bridal train wound away from the desert oasis; and, with it, also went the old sheikh and a small retinue, for Sid Norman had insisted upon his father-in-law accompanying him to view the new home of his Xarifa.

"Two days' journey to the eastward," Sid Norman had declared that home; and so the first day's travel,

the night-halt in the desert, and the second day's journeying had passed by; and when the sun sloped again down the western sky toward his setting, the towers and minarets of a great city appeared in view.

"Yonder is Bagdad—the home of my enemy, the Caliph!" exclaimed the old sheikh, an angry glow flaming up into his cheek. "Is thy home within its walls, Sid Norman? If so, Ben Hadaad parteth from thee at its gates." "Twere not wise in him to put his foot into a trap."

"Nay, my father, I have some interest with the Vizier, and thou art as safe in Bagdad as in thine own tent," pleaded Sid Norman; and much against his will, yet impelled as by a command from a superior, the old man urged Selim forward again.

Soon they were at the gates, had entered within its wall, and then, wonder of wonders! was old Ben Hadaad riding in a dream, or did his ears hear aright the sound that rose on either side, and swelled from the crowd that surged through the city streets to meet them!

"Welcome to Bagdad! Long live Ali Sid Norman, the Caliph! long live Xarifa, the Star of the Desert, our sultana! And long live the sheikh—bold, brave, generous Ben Hadaad—who saved the precious life of our sovereign whom the Bedouin assassins had cast dying at his tent door! Welcome to the great city of Bagdad!"

Seated in the throne-room of the palace, arrayed in costliest garments, and served by slaves with choicest viands and fruits on dishes of gold, Xarifa and her sire listened to the explanations of the young Caliph, who had lately succeeded his deceased father in the sovereignty of the empire, and who had won a bride who loved him for himself alone.

And, ever beloved and happy in her new home, reigned Sultana Xarifa; while, all olden fends forgotten, in his distant tent under the palms and date-trees dwelt Ben Hadaad, the Sheikh of the Desert.

C. H. W.

THE late Duke of Northumberland in early life entered the navy, and one of his biographers tells a pleasing anecdote, illustrative of the generosity of Lord Algernon Percy, as he was then called. A case of great distress was brought before the ship to which he belonged, and a subscription paper was sent round, and when presented to his lordship, he put his name down for £1,000, thus startling all the officers. The captain of the vessel at once wrote to his lordship's father upon the subject, and the reply of the duke was in keeping with the generous disposition of the son:—"I will honour my son's draft for any amount."

AN INDIAN CONJUROR.—The old conjuror now said that, for his next trick, he must be somewhere out of the glare of the sun, and sheltered from any air which might be stirring. We accordingly adjourned to the verandah. The conjuror spread a piece of matting, and squatted, producing from his shawls a bag, and emptied it on the stone in front of him. The contents were a quantity of little bits of wood; some, forked, like branches of a tree; some, straight; each a few inches long; besides these, there were some fifteen or twenty little painted wooden birds, about half an inch long. The old man chose one of the straightest and thickest of the bits of wood, and turning his face up in the air, poised it on the tip of his nose. The little boys who sat by him henceforth handed him whatever he called for. First, two or three more pieces of wood, which he poised on the piece already there, then a forked piece, to which he gradually made additions, until he had built upon his nose a tree with two branches. He always kept its balance by adding simultaneously on each side, holding a piece in each hand, and never once taking his eyes off the fabric. Soon the two branches became four, the fourfold, and so on, until a skeleton of a tree was formed, about two feet high, and branching off so as to overshadow his whole face; he could just reach with his hands to put the topmost branches on. It was a wonderful structure, and we all held our breath as he added the last bits. But it was not done yet. The boys now handed him the little birds, and still two at a time, one in each hand, he stuck them all over the tree. The complete immobility of his head and neck while he was balancing this structure on the tip of his nose, was something wonderful, and I think he must have breathed through his ears, for there was not the slightest perceptible motion about nose or mouth. After patting all the birds on, he paused, and we, thinking the trick was finished, began to applaud. But he held up his forefinger for silence. There was more to come. The boys put into one of his hands a short hollow reed, and into the other some dried peas. He then put a pea into his mouth, and using the reed as a pea-shooter, took aim and shot off the branch one of the birds. The breath he gave was so gentle and well calculated that it gave no perceptible movement to his face; it just sent the pea far enough to hit a particular bird, with perfect aim, and

knock it over. Not another thing on the tree moved. Another pea was fired in the same way, and another bird brought down, and so on until all the birds were jagged. The fire was then directed at the branches and limbs of the tree, and, beginning from the top-most, the whole of this astonishing structure was demolished piecemeal even more wonderfully than its manner of erection.—*Something Like a Conjuror.*

TELL YOUR MOTHER.

I WONDER how many girls there are who tell their mothers everything?—No matter how "ridiculous" it is that you have "never had an offer, although you were sixteen last Spring;" there is time enough, and to spare, yet. Girls who, falling in love, insist on getting married when they are babies, find studying after marriage tedious work. A premature, faded, vacant old age!—you surely cannot desire that?

When is your mind to be informed, or to grow, if you place it in a hothouse, so that only the flower of Love can be forced into early bloom, to the dwarfing of every other faculty? And even should such a foolish school-girl flirtation end in early marriage, how long, think you, before your husband would weary of a wife who only knew enough to talk about dress or dancing?

How painful for you to besilent, through ignorance, should you chance to have intelligent guests at your house! How painful when your only charm, youth and its prettiness, has faded, to find your husband gradually losing sight of you, as his mind expanded, and yours grew still narrower, with the inevitable care that only the brain of a sensible woman can keep from overwhelming her! How painful, as time passes on, and your children grow up about you, to hear them talk intelligently on subjects of which you scarcely know the names!

And this, remember, is taking the most favourable view of the result of school-girl flirtations. They may end far more disastrously, as many a foolish, wretched young girl could tell you.

But let us not talk of this. Your yearning for some one to love you, and you only, is natural and right; it is a great need of every woman's heart. But there is a time for everything; and it is wisdom before seeking this, to wait. Your choice at sixteen would be very different from your choice at twenty. A man who would quite suit you then, would only disgust and weary you when you grow older. Until school-days are over, therefore, you can well afford to let love rest.

Don't let the bloom and freshness of your heart be brushed off in silly flirtations. Study all you can, and keep your health. Render yourself truly intelligent. And, above all, tell your mother everything. "Fun" in your dictionary would sometimes be "indifference" in hers. It will do you no harm to look and see. Never be ashamed to tell her, who should be your best friend and confidant, all you think and feel. She was once a girl herself; she had her dreams, and can understand it. Not having been always as wise as she is now, she can spare you many a pang of humiliation and regret if you will profit by her advice.

It is very sad that so many young girls will tell every person before "mother" that which is most important she should know. It is very sad that indifferent persons should know more about her own young daughter than she herself. Don't you think so? You find it quite easy to tell your mother that you want a new dress, or hat, or shawl; but you would be quite ashamed to say—Mother, I wish I had a lover. Why not? That is nothing at all to be ashamed of. It is a perfectly natural wish; and your mother was given you to tell you just that, and a great many other things, which would convince you, if you listen to her, that it was best for you not to hurry into life's cares and responsibilities till your soul and body were fitted to carry you patiently and hopefully through them.

F. F.

FASHIONABLE SLANG.—In the early part of this century, the word "vastly" was used as an intense adverb, in place of "very;" "vastly fine, vastly well, vastly amusing," were common phrases of the day. This was succeeded by "monstrous;" and it was not at all an uncommon thing to hear a man spoken of as monstrous clever, a book as monstrous amusing, and so forth. Indeed, dandies of the period, utterly regardless of the absurdity of such an epithet, would call the reigning belle a "mons'ous pretty girl." In like manner, the rising generation employ some very remarkable adjectives to express their approbation. A good-natured man is described as a "stunning brick;" a pleasant ball becomes an "awfully jolly hop;" (fancy an entertainment being jolly and awful at the same time!) an evening party is facetiously known as a "tea-fight," or "maffin-struggle." "Busting," "fizzing," "screaming," and "scrumpious," are epithets which, if not universally popular, are well known to public-school and University men. I have even heard a young

lady (with a brother at college) go so far as to allude to dinner under the bold but significant synonym of a "blow out;" but this, I admit, is an exceptional case. Indeed, the use of this idiomatic language is regulated by certain conventionalities which it seems impossible to explain, but which are, nevertheless, observed with due regard for time and place. The vocabulary of slang is a republic, and not a monarchy; yet no one knows on what principle it is governed. Some words quickly fall into disuse, or are voted snobbish; others, of equally humble origin, presently become popular and last for years. A single instance of public caprice on this point will suffice. The expressions of "muff" and "chap" have both existed about a quarter of a century. Their etymology is doubtful, and, as far as propriety of speech is concerned, they are about on a par. Yet, while the first continues to be adopted by gentlemen, the latter is abandoned to footmen and shop-boys. Every one who has been brought up at a public-school knows what is meant by a "muff;" but woe betide the wretched freshman who talks of a "rum chap" at Eton or Westminster.

THE researches made in the grounds of Cambuskenneth Abbey have resulted in the discovery of the tomb of King James III. The Queen has graciously signified her wish to erect a memorial stone or cross over the remains of her Royal ancestors James III. and his Queen, Margaret of Denmark. During the excavations, several large oak trees were found in one of the foundations. These were carefully removed and placed in the tower. Having lain for 700 years in a wet soil, the oak has become of quite a black colour.

LADY VENETIA.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Since thou hast given a theme to this sad heart,
On which my thoughts still dwell,
My tongue is wearied in upbraiding thee!
And if to prayer thou wilt refuse all grace,
Tis fit that I denounce thy cruelty.

Vita Nuova.

LUCIA sat as one stunned by the revelation which had been made to her. She looked up vaguely and asked:

"Have you discovered anything? Could you detect the place through which the steward entered?"

"No—I discovered nothing. The walls seem as solid as this floor, yet he must have passed through some aperture in them. We must seek that until we find it, Lucia, for it is the only avenue of escape."

She shook her head despondingly.

"We shall never find it, sister. We shall perish here, unless I consent to what would be far worse than death, if my own life only were at stake. But I have no right to keep you in this dreadful place when I can give you freedom by the sacrifice of myself."

The nun sat down beside her and impressively said: "Put me entirely out of the question, Lucia, for if you were liberated to-morrow on the terms proposed by Baldoni, he would secure my silence by other means than those of which he spoke."

The listener shuddered, and asked:

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that a man so lost to feeling and principle as Baldoni is, will never rest satisfied till he has rendered it impossible for me to betray him. He would at once destroy us both, but for the hope that you will ultimately consent to become his wife."

"What then shall we do?"

"We must keep that hope alive by demanding from him another week for decision, and live on here as we may, cherishing the belief that God will send us help. He will never forsake so faithful a servant to humanity as I have been, nor a young and innocent creature like yourself, whose greatest desire is to do good to others. Yes—I feel the assurance that we shall yet be rescued, though we may watch for deliverance through many weary days of suffering and doubt. Remember what I now say to you, and let it sustain you when despondency dims my faith, as it often does that of the most trusting."

Lucia arose and threw herself into her arms.

"I promise to do so, beloved friend. We will strengthen each other for the trials before us, and await God's own good time for deliverance. I feel that it will be better to perish in darkness than become that miserable and degraded thing, the wife of so lost a wretch as we know Baldoni to be. Teach me to bear my lot in patience, sister, that I may not faint or falter in my refusal. I will have faith in your predictions, for that alone can sustain me. We will hourly pray for rescue, and even from this dreary prison the angels of mercy will wait our petitions to the throne of the Most High."

The nun kissed her, and almost cheerfully replied: "That is the right spirit, my child. Let us set our house in order and keep our lamp trimmed till the deliverer comes."

They then endeavoured to while away a few moments in looking over the garments Baldoni had brought with him, and in arranging their fresh supply of food. The books were a precious acquisition; they belonged to the nun, and Lucia read aloud from them many hours.

Another week passed, which seemed to the captives almost a century as its slow revolving hours rolled round.

As accurate an account of time as was possible to persons situated as they were was kept, but it was chiefly measured by the diminution of the oil in their can, and again the fear of darkness fell upon them.

A constant watch was kept for the last twenty-four hours upon the outer room, in the hope that the steward would appear before their lamp expired. But he was far too wary for that.

Resolved to penetrate the mystery of his entrance, if it were possible to do so, both the nun and Lucia stationed themselves in the outer apartment and awaited in breathless suspense the arrival of their gaoler.

Several hours of expectation passed away; every sense was strained to detect his approaching footsteps, but no indication was given.

Suddenly Lucia pressed the hand of Sister Maria, and breathlessly whispered:

"Some one is near me, I am sure of it, for I felt the air vibrate as if something was flitting past me."

A hoarse laugh answered the tone of her voice, and in another moment a light was struck and applied to the lamp Baldoni carried.

The flame flared up, revealing the solid walls and the repulsive face of the steward glaring on them within a few feet of the spot on which they sat. As before, he had brought with him a basket filled with such articles as he had hitherto furnished them; and after looking at them a moment he harshly said:

"I suspected some such ruse as this, and provided against it. I wouldn't advise you to be found in this room again when I come down, lest it should prove my last visit, which wouldn't be the best thing for you, my fair prisoners. Come with me into your own den, and empty the basket, for I have little time to fool away here."

They followed him into the inner vault, and while the nun removed the things from the basket, he turned to Lucia and asked:

"Are you reconciled to your subterranean home, or will you consent to come out on the terms I offered?"

"I have not yet made up my mind," she replied, as calmly as she could. "It is a momentous question to decide, and I must have more time."

"Oh, as to that, you can stay here as long as it suits you; I am not in a hurry. You are safe enough, and when your claims have been put forward and established, it will be time enough to bring you to the light of day again. All I wish you to understand is, that only through me can you ever hope for release. Your fate is absolutely in my power, and I am as unbending as iron."

"I fully understand that, but heaven is more powerful than you. Providence may yet give me back my freedom without any aid from you!"

"Well, if you can console yourself by such dreams, you are perfectly welcome to do so. They must end some time, in the conviction that you must accept my hand, or— You understand the alternative."

She bowed, and Baldoni prepared to depart. He rudely said as he closed the door:

"I carry a pistol ready cocked in my bosom, and the next time I come hither and hear a noise in the next cavern, I will fire it in the direction it comes from. You are warned now, and if either of you get killed it will be your own fault."

The door swung to and he was gone.

Days, weeks, months, passed away, only varied by the weekly visit of the steward. At first Sister Maria sought to beguile the time and rekindle hope by recurring to her palmistry, which she had hitherto refused to exercise on Lucia's behalf; but now she perused the lines of her hand day after day, dwelling on the promise she found in them that, after many crosses and trials, a happy and useful life would ensue them.

Gradually even this failed to reassure her, and a dull apathy seemed to settle over her mind. Lucia began to feel as if she must go mad if this dreary monotony continued much longer; yet her aversion to Baldoni increased with each visit he made.

Many times he urged her with an appearance of passionate fervour to become his wife and end her cruel captivity. As time passed on, he seemed to become more earnest in his desire to win her consent; but she still prayed to heaven for strength to resist his entreaties, and repeated her refusal.

More than once were they made to suffer for want of food; but when they thought the hour of immolation had arrived, Baldoni again appeared bearing the meagre portion on which two lives were sustained. The steward had changed his tactics now, and he only used persuasions and protestations of devotion to over-

the resistance of Lucia; but to them all she was inviolable. The failing nun strengthened her in her resolution never to give him her hand; and with rage Baldoni felt that, helpless and hopeless as they were, these two women possessed a power of resistance which might baffle him yet.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

In her concentrated is all beauty's light;
But of all cruelty the cold intense
Runs to her heart, where love's light never shines.

Dante.

THE remains of the youthful Marchesa of Colonna were consigned to the tomb with every mark of respect, and Pepita was permitted to appear at the obsequies as one of the chief mourners for her victim.

On his arrival at Palermo the Marquis sought a distant relative of his own, an old lady who lived in seclusion in a handsome villa situated in a beautiful portion of the Golden Shell. He asked of Signora Vanelli protection for the steward's daughter till he could bring about a reconciliation between Pepita and her father. This was readily granted, for the Marchesa was fond of young society, though she could seldom attract it to her quiet house. When she was presented to her new protectress, the fair face of the young girl found favour in her sight, and Pepita soon rendered herself almost as indispensable to the infirm old lady as she had lately been to the deceased marchesa.

When her kinsman made his daily call, Signora Vanelli was never tired of decanting on the charming merits of the companion he had brought her, and she declared her intention to keep Pepita with her altogether, if she would consent to remain.

This unprincipled girl, with her subdued manner, her tender sympathy, and grateful warmth of expression, was a most dangerous object of contemplation to a man situated as the young marquis was. His wounded heart sought for consolation, and the desolation to which he was left through his recent bereavement caused him to cling to any creature who offered him the affectionate sympathy his nature craved.

The true history of Lucia's betrothal to his father had never been permitted to reach him, and he thought of her with a sick feeling of disgust which he believed to be a most effectual panacea for the love that had once felt for her.

One morning the marquis came to the villa at an early hour, and requested to see Pepita. She came in dressed in most becoming half mourning, and after greeting him she said, with an appearance of much regret:

"I can divine what brought you hither. You have heard from my father, and you come perhaps to tell me that he is inexorable; that he refuses to receive me again unless I do violence to my own heart by accepting the addresses of Santani."

"Quiet your fears, dear Pepita. Your father is far more pliable than I hoped. He has evidently softened so much from his separation from you that he is glad to welcome you back to his arms again almost on your own terms. It is true that he still clings to the hope that you will ultimately consent to wed Santani; but he loves you too much to force a distasteful suitor upon your acceptance. And now, dear girl, permit me to ask you one question. Have you not encouraged this young man for a long time to hope for final success with you? He is rich, intelligent, and I believe will make you a most tender and devoted husband."

Pepita burst into tears. She passionately exclaimed: "This from you! Oh, Vittorio, why reproach me for the wrong I committed against Santani while I was ignorant of my own heart? Once I thought I should love and marry him; but when my true hero appeared, he became odious in my sight. No—no, no! I could never consent to accept Santani; from any man I could better bear mediation in the cause of death."

But even construction could be put upon her words, and the heart of the marquis beat thick and fast with emotions they aroused. He forgot his rank, his position of caste, and thought only of the beautiful syren before him who avowed her preference for himself in an unequivocal manner.

Flattered, bewildered, charmed, he spoke in low, sweet tones born of the varied emotions that swayed in his bosom:

"Pepita, do I understand you aright? Has a long, unrequited preference for me stood in the way of your advantageous settlement in life? If such is the case, I should feel bound to—"

He paused; for, strongly as he was attracted towards her, he yet hesitated to make her an offer of his hand so soon after the death of the lovely being who had lost.

Pepita buried her face in her hands, and wept more bitterly than before.

"No—no," she sobbed. "You are bound by nothing. My own foolish heart betrayed me, and you were not to blame. But even when I consented to further your union with the false Lucia, I felt that I was sacrificing my own happiness to secure yours. I have been unselfish toward you, Vittorio. I rejoiced when I heard of your marriage with the angel who is gone, for I felt sure she would make you happier than Lucia ever could have done. I yearned to behold your wife, to see you once more, and it was that feeling that led me to Paris. I thought then that I had conquered my unfortunate attachment; that I could behold the happiness of yourself and Lady Venetia without the jealous pang I should have felt had Lucia been your wife. I was weaker than I thought, but what I suffered I will not now dwell on. You can bear witness to my devotion to your wife, and I forced myself to be contented to bask in the sunshine of your joy. But can you blame me, Vittorio, if my heart has gone back to its old allegiance in the weeks of unrestrained intercourse which have passed since her death? I know it is wrong and indelicate to speak thus to you; but my heart will break if I do not lay bare its sufferings to him who has innocently caused them; who has increased them by coming to me as the intercessor of another."

Such a tempest of sobs closed this unwomanly revelation, that the marquis could do nothing less than attempt to soothe her into calmness.

Flattered, bewildered, fascinated by the frank avowal she had made, believing implicitly in her sincerity, Vittorio forgot everything but the charming being who professed to have loved him even while his heart was devoted to another. That other had proved faithless, but here was the sterling gold which was to repay him for all he had suffered.

In such a crisis as this, he could not pause to deliberate on his course; it lay plain enough before him, and he gravely, and gently said:

"I am most grateful to you, dear Pepita, for the preference you have accorded me, and when the time arrives in which I can honourably seek one to console me for the loss I so recently sustained, I need scarcely say that you alone will be the object sought. With the ashes of my late wife scarcely cold in their grave, I cannot woo a successor. But the time for that will come; a year hence I may demand your hand of your father, and take to my desolate home a new mistress."

Pepita stifled the exultant bound of her heart, and deprecatingly said:

"Ah, Vittorio, you will not dare so far to violate your pride of caste, as to take to your heart the humble steward's daughter. No noble blood flows in my veins. I am but a daughter of the people, and those of your own rank will reproach you for making so sad a *mésalliance*. Think of all these things, dear Vittorio, and if your pride should yet recoil from the sacrifice you are ready to make in return for my adoring love, you are free to retract the pledge you have just given. Your hand must be a free and voluntary gift, sanctioned by the judgment of your heart, or I will never consent to accept it."

"My mother was also a daughter of the people, and the blood of Baldoni is as noble as that of the Ganazzi," he proudly replied. "The woman I choose as my wife, and elevate to the rank of Marchesa of Colonna, is as worthy of the station as if the blood of the Cæsars coursed in her veins. Dearest Pepita, still be to me the consoling angel you have proved in my late afflictions, and my sorely wounded heart will cling to you as tenderly as I once fancied it did to the false one who won my first affections. We will continue to be the most faithful of friends while my mourning lasts; and in that time, learn to value the best traits of each other before we pronounce the irrevocable vows that will bind us together for life."

With a most bewitching expression of shyness and happiness, Pepita replied:

"Vittorio! this joy is too great for me, and I feel myself unworthy of it. To become yours—to possess the privilege of being always near you, is such ineffable bliss, even in anticipation, that I am overwhelmed by it."

The Marquis, with affectionate fervour, pressed his lips upon her brow, and uttered such words as the occasion seemed to demand. Under the spell of Pepita's blandishments he seemed to have no will of his own. He felt compelled to act as she desired; to obey the magnetic power she held over him; and she felt with exultation that she had at last established over him so strong an influence that, struggle as he would, he could now never escape her. She at length said:

"I understand fully that this is no betrothal, Vittorio, for the dread voice of the world would condemn us both if we dreamed of such a thing as yet. But we are as strongly bound to each other by what has just passed, as if the church had sanctioned our vows. I hold myself bound, and so, I am sure, do you. Give me the ring you wear as a token of your fidelity, that I may gaze on it in solitude, and feel the sweet assurance that this is not all a dream. I may be forgiven for

doubting the reality of the happiness which has so unexpectedly dawned upon me."

The marquis still wore a circlet of gold upon his fourth finger, which Pepita knew had once belonged to Lucia. It was the only link that bound him to her, and he had not yet summoned courage to remove it, because the hapless girl had requested him to wear it till they met again. He slightly changed colour at Pepita's request, and, muttering some inaudible words, drew the ring off, and dashed it through an open window. Turning to her, he then said:

"It is the last symbol of my infatuation, and no fitting gift for you, Pepita. When I visit you to-morrow, I will bring you one more worthy the acceptance of the future Marchesa of Colonna."

"Ah! I understand; it was hers—the treacherous and false one. You are right, my Vittorio; that ring should not be worn by her who will be faithful to you till death."

Her head sank upon his breast; and the flattered young man felt that life was no longer a blank. Such love as this must console him for all he had lost, and still make the future bright and beautiful. When he at last arose to leave her, he said:

"I will write to your father at once, and confide our secret to him. In the new and more brilliant prospects which have dawned on you, he will be consoled for your refusal of Santani. Poor fellow! I can afford to sympathise with his loss, when the bright gem he wished to appropriate will shed its lustre on my future."

She raised her love-beaming eyes to his; and softly said:

"I too will write, and humble myself to implore my father's forgiveness for my escapade. He loves you, Vittorio, and he will be greatly elated by the information that his naughty child has achieved so noble a conquest as his young master. I shall owe everything to you, my beloved, and I rejoice that such is the case. I seek to be nothing, and have nothing, save through you—my king!"

Every man is susceptible to flattery, and the Marquis of Colonna was no exception to his kind. He accepted the sweet incense thus freely offered with an elevation of feeling which he mistook for love. He forgave Pepita's lack of delicacy in consideration of her passion for himself, and was blind to the fact that he had been artfully entrapped into binding himself to her in bonds which might yet become shackles of iron to him, eating into his heart of hearts.

Vittorio had scarcely left her, when Pepita seized a pen, and dashed off the following lines to her father:

"Eureka! the game is played, and won! Scarcely a month has elapsed since the marchesa was laid in her grave, and already Vittorio is mine."

"I have just parted from him, and he is pledged to me by every tie that can bind an honourable man. I have no fear of losing him now; but it is best to reserve explanations till we meet. So soon as you write to him that I am forgiven—that I may return to the shelter of your roof—I will come back in triumph, bearing with me the rich spoil I have secured through my own will and power."

"In another year you will behold me reigning over Colonna as its lawful mistress, and your highest hopes for me be fulfilled."

"The latest accounts from the Marquis of Amalfi state that he is in a condition of hopeless madness; so all fear from that quarter is at rest. But of these affairs we will speak when we meet, as letters are sometimes unsafe repositories for family secrets."

"Vittorio will send this to you in the same envelope with his petition for my restoration to your favour in the character of his future wife. Poor Santani! I have made good use of his name, but he will never know it. Yours, exultingly,

"PEPITA."

The letters were duly dispatched, and as soon as possible a reply to both arrived. Baldoni expressed his thanks to the young Marquis for his preference for his daughter, but set out at length every objection that could be brought forward against the marriage of his late master's son into his obscure family. He ended by declaring that nothing less than the conviction that Pepita's very life depended on their union, should ever induce him to consent to it. He insisted that the young nobleman should maturely weigh all his arguments; but if he still persisted in his intention to wed his daughter, he should be the proudest and happiest of men to welcome him as his son-in-law.

To Pepita he wrote tenderly and forgivingly, and entreated her to return at once to his protection. He could no longer bear to be separated from her, and he pledged himself that no reproach should greet her for her evasion.

With eyes swimming in tears, Pepita read this hypocritical effusion to the Marquis, and he marvelled that until of late he had never suspected the deep sensibility with which she was endowed.

Preparations for an immediate return to Catania were made; Senora Vanelli reluctantly consented to

part from her companion for a season, and exacted from her a promise to visit her again before the year expired. A female attendant was engaged to accompany Pepita; and the marquis, with one servant and the two women, embarked for Catania.

The voyage was delightful; the weather deliciously soft, with just enough breeze to carry the light vessel through the water without producing the nausea of sea-sickness. The marquis and Pepita spent the days together beneath an awning spread on deck for their accommodation, and the enchantress flattered him so well that the deluded young man actually began to think her love worth all that had been hitherto lavished on him. The devotion of Lucia—the tender adoration of his lost wife, sunk into insignificance in contrast with the passionate attachment she professed to feel for him.

In this pleasant hallucination he journeyed on, hour by hour becoming more deeply enthralled by the fascinations of his companion. After a successful voyage, the vessel entered the port of Catania, which showed the fearful ravages of the late convulsion. More than half the town was destroyed, and many of the inhabitants had been buried beneath the ruins of their houses.

Baldoni was there, awaiting their arrival; and on meeting, a most effective scene was enacted between father and daughter for the benefit of the marquis. He had brought with him one of the carriages from Colonna, and in it the party immediately set out for that place.

Toward sunset Vittorio came in sight of the ruins of his once stately home, and, with a painful contraction of the heart, the young heir looked upon the shattered walls in which his father had met so sad a fate. He insisted on alighting, and walking round the place, though he promised the steward to be at his cottage in time for supper. An apartment had been prepared for him there, which it was understood he was to occupy till the repairs going on at the castle were completed.

With many conflicting emotions, the marquis wandered through the grounds he had last seen blooming in beauty. He stood upon the broken threshold, and looked with saddened heart upon the desolation which reigned where order and peace had so lately dwelt.

The massive walls, broken and crushed in places, still stood—the rubbish had been cleared away, and the builders had already made some progress towards the restoration of the pile to its pristine grandeur.

He thought of the false and mercenary being who he believed had been ready to barter herself to become the mistress of that stately home, and the gall of bitterness was in his heart as her image arose before him in his young beauty.

Then came the memory of the fair bride he hoped to install there, now lying in her marble sarcophagus, cold and stony as itself; and last of all, the living tide of love and passion that swelled the wild heart of his latest love, came as a soothing balm to his wounded and sorrowful spirit.

Ah! if he could only have looked beneath the surface; have sounded the depths of that remorseless nature, how would he have recoiled from the baneful consolation she offered to his acceptance!

When he turned from this melancholy survey, and again sought Pepita, all her blandishments were necessary to bring back smiles to his lips or light to his eyes.

The spell of the past was upon him, and the memory of the father who had so fondly loved him, subdued his spirits till he could have wept for him, as well as for the outraged dream of love which arose before him clothed in its first radiant hues of perfect trust.

While he lingered near the home once consecrated by Lucia's presence, the brief happiness of that time had been lived over again; and with bitter contempt, for his own weakness, he felt that if she stood before him, called his name in her old accents of affection, he would turn from the enchantress who held him in her subtle bonds, and clasping his first love to his heart, cast into oblivion all his wrongs, if she would only consent to deceive him as sweetly as she had once done.

With that deep intuition which was one of Pepita's characteristics, she read what was passing in his mind, and bitterly resented it; but she decked her face in smiles, modulated her voice to its most seductive tones, and charmed him so deftly that the cloud gradually cleared from his brow. When supper was over he found opportunity to whisper:

"I have been thinking over the past; regretting much of it, Pepita; but I will sin against you in that way, no more. Your devotion merits a better return from me."

She raised her eyes, dewy with emotion, and replied in the same tone:

"It was natural and right. Take time to bury your regrets, Vittorio; I shall not prove too exacting. Our horizon will be all the brighter when the illusions which have misled you are cleared away."

He pressed her hand to his lips, and turned toward Baldoni, who invited him to a private conference in

his own apartment. When they were seated beside a table covered with papers, the steward gravely said:

"I have prepared my accounts for your inspection, my lord, and we can look over them together whenever you please. Everything has been kept in the strictest order, and you will have no difficulty in understanding them."

The marquis waved his hand impatiently.

"I have implicit confidence in your integrity, Baldoni, and there is little need of such an inspection just now. I am unfit for business to-night. Some other time will answer as well, when I am less occupied with painful thoughts."

"Excuse me, my lord, I did not summon you hither to-night for that purpose, for I am aware that a man just off a journey does not feel inclined to examine into business affairs. I merely wished to inform you that I am ready whenever you wish to look into them."

"Why, then, have you asked to see me alone?"

"To place in your hands a sacred deposit confided to me by your late father. You received the key of the casket, and in it, I presume, will be found the clue to the family secret."

All Vittorio's listlessness vanished; he was at once vividly interested, and his cheeks flushed as he replied:

"The last communication I ever received from my father's hand enclosed the key of which you speak. Since then I have carried it constantly about my person. I feared that the casket had been destroyed in the castle till you wrote to assure me that it had been saved. Of late I have thought little about it; in the treasure chamber I shall find nothing but gold, and of that I already have more than should fall to the share of one man."

"It may contain other things of more importance, my lord; we do not know what may have been concealed there during so long a period of time as it is known to have existed."

"It may be so; here is the key," and he produced the shining cube of steel, fashioned by Baldoni, secured by a fine chain of gold, which was passed around his neck. "You have the casket here, I presume; produce it, and let us examine its contents."

"Together, my lord? Remember that this secret has hitherto been held sacred in your family. From father to son it has alone been transmitted, and I do not wish to pry into what does not belong to my province."

"You are over fastidious, Baldoni. I am the last of my family, and you, as the father of my future wife, have as much interest in this as I possess. If I should hereafter have a son to transmit this mystery to, he will not murmur that his grandfather was made aware of the entrance to the treasure chamber."

"Then you are resolved to make my daughter your wife in spite of all I have urged to show you the disadvantage of such a *mésalliance* to a man of your rank?" said the wily schemer.

"I am pledged to Pepita, sacredly, and I shall not break faith with her; let that suffice. The men of my race have never yet broken a promise they have given, and in this my happiness as well as that of your daughter is involved."

Baldoni grasped his hand with great apparent feeling, and warmly said:

"Spoken like the true and honourable son of your noble father. I am the proudest and happiest man in this island, in knowing that my child has won the love of such a heart as yours."

"There—there; that will do, Baldoni. We did not come here to make fine speeches to each other, but to attend to business. Produce the casket, and let us see what it contains."

The steward opened an iron chest, and took from it a small oval box, bound with steel bands, and placed it on the table before him. The marquis tried the key he held in his hands, but it refused to open the lock. He said:

"Time must have rusted the lock; the key refuses to turn."

"Let me try, my lord," said Baldoni, with perfect self-possession. "Remove the key from the chain, and give it to me. I saw your father open it on the day he deposited the paper of directions in it, and I may be able to uncloset it for you."

Perfectly unobtrusive, his companion detached the key and placed it in his hand.

At that moment Pepita slightly unclosed the door, and laughingly said she came to remonstrate against business being transacted on the first night of his return. Vittorio turned his face toward her, and replied that he would soon rejoin her in the sitting-room.

The diversion thus purposely made enabled the steward to exchange the key for the one in his possession, and when the marquis again turned toward the table the casket lay open before him. The jewels Pepita had declared her intention of appropriating had been restored, for she now felt assured they would

legitimately become her own. Above them lay the diagram, of which such unscrupulous use had already been made. With deep interest the young heir examined it, and then said:

"This is so clearly drawn that there can be little difficulty in tracing the route, if the late earthquake has not blocked it up. To-morrow we will ascertain that, for you must accompany me in my explorations. I shall not venture to go alone through the subterranean alley which leads to the chamber."

"Perhaps it will be safer to have some one with you, my lord, and I am now as deeply interested in preserving the secret as you can be. I shall hold myself in readiness to accompany you to the spot at any hour you may name."

"We will go at twilight, after the workmen have left the place, as I do not wish any one to be aware that such a visit has been made. These gems were my mother's—I remember them well, and I have them here as a present to Pepita. When the time for her to wear them arrives, they will become her well."

"My daughter will be delighted with your munificence, for, like most of her sex, she is fond of finery," replied Baldoni, with a grim smile of satisfaction.

Vittorio lifted the sparkling gems, and held them to the light. He recalled the fair image of his mother, adorned with them on many occasions, and faintly smiled, as he said:

"They have been worn by one noble and true woman, who was raised by love from a humble to a high position, and she who will succeed her is worthy to possess them, though, like her, she claims no titled ancestry. I appreciate your daughter as highly, Baldoni, as my father did her he chose from the people as his consort."

"Thank you, my son—for such I may now call you," replied the steward, grasping his hand strongly. "I deeply feel the honour you have conferred upon us, and I may now say that Pepita will not come to you a portionless bride."

"Endow her as you will, it is herself alone I need to win. The death of my poor brother, followed so quickly by that of my father, has given me more than I cared to possess. What you have to give, settle on Pepita herself; your hard earned gains must not go to swell my already too full coffers."

"You are generous, my lord, but it shall be as you wish."

The marquis arose as if tired of the conversation; he locked the casket after removing the jewels, and replaced the key upon its guard. Baldoni returned to the diamonds to his iron chest, and the two rejoined Pepita.

A quick glance of intelligence passed between the father and daughter, and she was assured that her opportune interruption had secured the exchange of the keys without observation from her lover.

She enticed him into the bright moonlight that shone without, and for an hour they wandered through the well-known paths talking of the past.

Pepita pretended to give her companion a minute history of what had occurred at the castle after his departure, and she managed to place Lucia in the most odious light before him.

Her reluctance to wed his father was not alluded to, and she unobtrusively asserted that Lucia had shown the most violent chagrin and disappointment when the news of his brother's sudden death deferred the marriage which was to lift her so far above the sphere in which fate had placed her.

At the close of the recital, the marquis bitterly said:

"I am glad she is no longer here. I could not bear again to look upon her, and remember what she once was to me."

"I, too, am glad, for she has infinite art, and she might again throw her spells around you. But thank heaven! she is by this time safe in England, with her father, and all we have to do is to forget her existence and be happy with each other."

To this Vittorio replied by some tender words, though at the moment his heart was writhing with a sense of the hollowiness of everything on earth, since that apparently gentle and ingenuous nature could be capable of such deceit and treachery as was imputed to the unfortunate Lucia.

(To be continued.)

WILLS.—A very large portion of the business of the court is provided by wills. In the majority of cases, where testators make their own wills, or have them prepared by incompetent persons, they unconsciously provide food for the lawyers. To save a few pounds in his lifetime, a testator will often deprive his children and legatees of hundreds after his death. It is an old saying, and a true one, that the village schoolmaster and the parish clerk are the lawyers' best friends. Nearly every one thinks himself competent to draw a will, a document which requires more skill and caution in its preparation.

than any other that could be named. Even lawyer-selves who draw their own wills often make mistakes. Sir Samuel Romilly's will was improperly worded, and that of Chief Baron Thompson the subject of Chancery proceedings. The will of Bradley, the celebrated conveyancer, a man who spent all his life in drawing other people's wills, was set aside by Lord Thurlow for uncertainty; and a late learned Master in Chancery directed the proceeds of his estate to be invested in Consols in his own name! Not long ago an application had to be made to the Probate Court on consequence of a testator having supposed that the word executrix was the plural of executor—the same individual, by the way, talked of "provoking" all former wills! In another case, a man left some property to his nephew John, when he had two nephews of that name, and a suit in Chancery was instituted for the purpose of ascertaining which of the nephews the testator meant to benefit; and "once upon a time," a country attorney, who had, perhaps, a spite against his relations, left eleven hundred pounds to three gentlemen, his executors, to appropriate eight hundred pounds "as they might think proper;" for which arduous task, he bequeathed them one hundred pounds each. "Will," said Lord Coke, "and the construction of them, do more to perplex a man than any other, and to make a certain construction of them exceedeth jurisdiction *artem*.—Court of Chancery.

THE CHINESE DRAMA.—The characters are grouped under nine heads:—1. Principal male actors. 2. Secondary actors. 3. Courtesans, to whom the name of female libidinous monster is applied. 4. Foxes, i.e. officials. 5. Buffoons, obscene fellows, whose faces are daubed with black or white paint. 6. Pao—old women—the title of a dirty female bird. 7. Naou, monkeys who are said to pick vermin out of the heads of tigers, and to feed upon their brains, i.e. procurers. 8. Jokers, called alippery spies. And 9. Wit-singers. The preface gives details as to the proper subjects of dramatic acts, among which are transformations by gods and demons, court ceremonials, portraits of scholars and statesmen, hooting down adulterers and exposing slanderers, war scenes with swords and clubs, misfortunes of exiled mandarins and orphan children, winds, flowers, snows, and moons, love pieces; smoke, flowers, dirty faces, i.e. exhibitions of low life: deities and devils *ad libitum*. In ancient times the great stage entrance was called the *spirits' door*.

THE CONVENTIONALITIES OF PRONUNCIATION.

What shall we say of the conventionalities of pronunciation, and the mysterious caprice which regulates the value of our British vowels and consonants? In the primers and horn-books of infant life, D, O, G, the pet dog from time immemorial. But the dandies of the Restoration called that intelligent, little quadruped a *dog*, and the dandies of our own time call it a *dog*. Much commiseration has been felt for the "poor letter H," and the neglect with which it has been treated in cockney dialect. But the letter R is worse off, for its use is being gradually abandoned in those quarters where the purity of the Queen's English is supposed to be most scrupulously preserved. As we initial, it was once the fashion to pronounce it as a W; and, indeed, it was only the other day that I heard a man speaking of some ridiculous error which had crept into a celebrated drama, and remained there long after it had been written, read, repeated, and rehearsed. This was an affectation which came in with Lytton Bulwer, and departed with Thackeray.

There are few, even of our youngest exquisite, who venture to speak in such accents now. But the R is nevertheless, slurred over and even omitted by many, who would scout the idea of imitating a natural defect of speech. What has become, for instance, of the final consonant in the word "father?" In west country dialect it is still preserved, but in polite circles it is pronounced *faiths*; never, *neval*, and so forth.

Half a century ago, the letter A was similarly misused. Old gentlemen still exist who speak of St. James's-street and the Pelicinate. E and I changed their places. "Arithmetic" was called *arithmetick*, and "messenger" became *missinger*. To this day Lord Russell declares that he is *obleged*, and it is a curious proof how extremes meet, that the same expression is adopted by the humblest labourer in Devonshire. The truth is, that when the word was originally borrowed from the French, everyone called it "obleged;" and this provincialism, like many others of the same class, is nothing more than the old-fashioned talk of our forefathers.

That our pronunciation, not only of English, but of foreign languages, has materially altered with this generation, there can be little doubt. The other day I met with an old book of French phrases, in which the ingenious author had endeavoured to convey a

sort of phonetic equivalent of their sound to British ears. Thus we were told that "embonpoint" should be pronounced *ang-bong-piang*, "chef-d'œuvre," as *she-dover*, "tout ensemble," as *ta-tang-sam'ble*, &c. Fancy our adhering to such a system now, and the surprise with which Frenchmen would hear such a sentence as "Becang, je reveeangdray demang mat-tang!"

People of education are scrupulous in calling Berkeley Square Barklea Square, the Derby Day the Darby, and so forth. In the main they are right, for these words are proper names, and should be, of course, pronounced as their owners pronounce them. But it must be remembered that the corruption of names is only due to a fleeting fashion, which another generation may ignore. Thus, while "Majoribanks" remains "Marchbanks," and Cholmondeley Chumley, Cavendish, which was once called Candish, has returned to its original length.

THE ABDUCTED WARD.

A CABMAN'S STORY.

I CAME home from India sick and sore from many wounds, bringing with me the horse that had borne me through fourteen battles. The captain of the ship was my friend, and he allowed my faithful beast a passage for a slight consideration.

Three months in London restored to me something of my former health; but completely emptied my purse. I was not yet in debt, but there was a fair prospect that I should be, if I did not stir myself. What should I do? First, I thought of selling my horse; but when I went to his stall, and he laid his head so affectionately upon my bosom, I could not bear the thought.

"That's a knowin' animal of yours, Mr. Durner," observed the ostler.

"Yes," I replied. "He's picked up knowledge under difficulties."

"Praps ye'd like to sell him? He's a little old an' shaky like; but then he'd be good for somethin'. He'd do for a light cab."

"What? Put my faithful old charger to a cab?"

How ridiculous it seemed!

And yet, before that day had passed, I had resolved that I would hire a cab, and go into business on my own account.

It was a curious business for an old soldier like me; but it was an honest business, and I was not afraid of it. I found a good cab at the very stable where my horse had been kept, which I succeeded in hiring upon very reasonable terms; and thus prepared, I took up my position on the stand near Blackfriars Bridge.

During the first two weeks I had as much as I could do, or, at least, as much as I was willing my horse should do; but at the expiration of that time my business was essentially contracted.

Monday—Tuesday—Wednesday, and not a passenger.

My prospects were certainly not of the most promising kind. At ten o'clock on Wednesday evening all the other cabmen took their departure, leaving the field to myself. The fog had settled down thick and heavy, and the street lamps were scarcely visible.

I walked up and down the pavement, ever and anon stopping to pat my horse upon the neck and talk with him, until a distant clock struck eleven, and no passengers yet.

I had mounted to my seat, determined to go to the stable, when a man came up and hailed me. Was that my cab, and was I at liberty? I answered both questions in the affirmative.

"I want to hire you for an hour," said the stranger.

I told him I was at his service; and as I spoke, another man emerged from the gloom, and approached my cab.

"I wish to hire you," pursued the first comer; "and if you consent to the proposition I mean to make, I will pay you liberally. I think there is room upon your seat for two men."

I replied that we could make room.

"Then," said he, "I'll tell you what my proposition is. You shall suffer yourself to be blindfolded, you shall take a seat upon your box, and you shall allow my companion to take the reins. You shall not remove the bandage from your eyes until you have permission so to do, and you shall ask no questions. What say you?"

The individual who thus spoke was a young man, very well dressed; and though he bore himself with the air of a gentleman, yet I could see that he was inclined to fast living and dissipation. His companion was of a different cast—short, stout, poorly dressed, and evidently a crackman.

Had I spoken from my first impulse, I should have refused to listen to the proposition; but upon second thought I changed my mind.

There was a spice of adventure in the prospect, which suited me; and, moreover, I am free to confess that I wanted the money.

"I will pay you liberally," added the applicant, when he saw me hesitate; "and I furthermore assure you that no harm shall come to you."

It was not of myself that I was now thinking, for I was not much used to fear; but should I allow a stranger to drive my horse? Why not? I was to ride by his side, and I could quickly throw the bandage from my eyes should he abuse the noble animal.

"Well, sir," I said, "what will you pay?"

"If you are true—if you hold your tongue, and keep the bandage on until you have permission to remove it, I will give you five pounds."

"It's a bargain," said I; "but before we start I have a remark to make. If I think there is either danger to myself or to my horse, I shall be very apt to let you know it."

"You need have no fears in that direction," he replied. "My man is used to the reins, and he will drive very carefully."

Without further remark, I allowed them to bind a large silk kerchief about my eyes, after which I climbed to my seat. The crackman was soon by my side, with the reins in his hand, his master having ensconced himself inside. Once or twice my horse hesitated, and once he fairly stopped, upon hearing the strange voice and feeling the strange hand; but a word from me quickly set him right.

I think we had ridden half a mile, when the cab stopped, and the gentleman got out from the inside. I heard him rapidly ascend a few steps; I heard what sounded like the turning of a key, and the shooting of a bolt; I heard a door opened and closed. It seemed a long time that I sat there by the side of the crackman in silence, though I suppose it was really not more than five minutes. I was strongly tempted to open a conversation with my companion, just to pass away the time; but I remembered my promise, and resolved to keep it.

By and by I heard the door opened, and the sound of a man's feet upon the steps; but the movement was not a free or active one. The tread was slow and heavy, as though the man bore some weighty burden in his arms. Nor was I mistaken; for when he reached the pavement my companion leaped down from the box, and I could easily distinguish that they were lifting something into the cab—something which one man could not easily handle. And one other thing I noticed: the fumes of chloroform were very palpable. I could not be mistaken. I had smelled it so much in the hospital at Calcutta, that I detected it very quickly. What were my thoughts as the crackman resumed his seat by my side and started on, I cannot tell; for I thought a great many things in a very short time.

On we went, through many streets, and around many corners; and when we stopped again it seemed as though we had ridden over most of the city. We had been in some harrow, dirty streets, as I could tell by the echo from the close walls and by the run of the wheels; and we had been in some wide ones. As near as I could judge, we had been three-quarters of an hour from our first stopping-place; and I knew that we were close to the river, as I could tell by the sound of plashing oars and voices of the boatmen. My companion again leaped down, and assisted his master in lifting the burden from the cab.

"You may help me up the steps," I heard the gentleman say; and presently afterwards I could detect that they were bearing their load across a side-walk.

The temptation was strong, and I could not resist it.

With a quick movement of my left hand I raised the bandage from my eyes. We were in a dark, narrow street, where the fog was still thick and heavy; but a neighbouring gas-light enabled me to see the two men bearing something up a short flight of steps—something which looked very much like a female, if I might judge by the habiliments.

A door was opened, and an old woman, with a candle in her hand, made her appearance. The young man bore his burden into the hall, and the crackman turned back toward the street. I knew that he regarded me sharply as he resumed his seat by my side, but he could detect nothing out of the way.

He took the reins from my hands and drove off, and at the end of half an hour or so he stopped, and told me that I might remove the bandage. I did so, and found myself at my old stand.

We proceeded to the nearest lamp, where he paid me the price agreed upon, after which he remarked that he might have occasion for my services again.

"You will find it for your interest," he added, "to keep perfectly silent about this."

I did not tell him how lightly I held this implied threat, but gave him to understand that he would find me at my post when he wanted me.

It was an hour past midnight when my horse had been stalled and fed; and as I sought my lodgings my

mind was busy with the events of the night, and the conviction was forced upon me that I had been lending my aid to the accomplishment of some evil work.

On the following morning, at a later hour than usual, I was at my stand, where I remained until four o'clock in the afternoon without earning a penny. Before taking my horse home to give him his supper, I thought I would drop into a neighbouring taproom, and drink a pot of ale.

A man, in a fine suit of fiver, was standing at the bar, and as I called for my ale he turned towards me. His countenance was familiar.

"Mark Danner!" he cried, putting out his hand, "is this you?"

I quickly recognized him. It was Tom Gasson. We had been comrade soldiers in India, and during the latter part of the war with the Sikhs we had been orderlies together in attendance upon General Sir Charles Copeland. We shook hands most cordially, and after the first impulsive salutations we retired to a side-table, there to drink our ale, and talk over old affairs. I had been wounded at Googurat, and there Tom and I had separated, and I had not seen him since until now. What was he doing in London? I asked.

"I am still in Sir Charles's service," he told me.

"What!" I cried. "Is Sir Charles Copeland in London? Really, I should like to see him. I think he would welcome an old soldier who had followed him through so many perils."

"Of course he would, Mark; but you must wait a while, for just at this time, he is in trouble—ah! a terrible trouble, old boy."

"What is it, Tom?"

"It is something that strikes home to his heart. A maiden whom he loved as he loved his own life, has been mercilessly torn away from him."

"How? When?" I asked.

"Ah, my boy, we don't know how; but she has been missing since last night; and I have been to Scotland-yard to start more of the police on the search."

"Who was she? What was she?" I eagerly inquired.

"Why, bless me," said Tom, "you seem to be startled. You look paler than you did at Googurat."

"Never mind my looks. Tell me of this girl. Perhaps I can help you."

"Eh?"

"Will you tell me?"

"Certainly," replied Tom, setting down his glass. "She was Sir Charles's niece and ward, and her name was Clara Copeland, only child of the baronet's brother. She was an heiress, too."

"Has Sir Charles any suspicions of the guilty party?" I asked.

"I don't know," answered Tom. "He may have; but he keeps them to himself, or, at any rate, he hasn't said anything to me about them."

After some further conversation the conviction was strong within me that I had unwittingly helped in the abduction of the baronet's ward; and I told Tom that I must see his master.

"It is not impossible," said I, "that I may be able to help in this matter. At all events, I can try."

The valet did not need much urging. He was ready to conduct me to the baronet at once. So I took my horse to the stable, and when I had fed him I returned to the tap-room, where Tom was waiting for me. We went out together, and having called a cab, we were whirled away, and set down before a stately mansion which we entered by a side passage. I was left alone for a short time; and when Tom came back he informed me that his master was anxious to see me.

I found Sir Charles to be the same noble-looking, frank-faced man as in past years; only there was more silver in his hair, and his strong features were shadowed by grief. He was glad to see me, and called me as familiarly by name as though I had been his equal.

"Mark," he said, after I had taken a seat, "you will excuse me if I omit ceremony, and hurry on to the business which brought you here. My valet tells me that you may help me to find my niece. If you can do so, you may name your own reward."

I was determined to proceed carefully, for I would not raise hopes which I could not answer with success.

"I am not sure," I replied, "that I can help you at all; but I may be able to do it. Your niece was taken away—"

"Last night," said the baronet, interrupting me. "She was my ward—the only child of my brother—a lovely, precious being, who had become all in all to me. If I do not find her, there will be no more joy for me in this world!"

"Have you any suspicions?" I asked. "Do you think of any one who could have had an object in taking her away?"

Sir Charles arose and walked to the window, and as he returned he motioned for Tom to leave the room.

"Mark Danner, why do you ask me that question? Is it from mere curiosity, or have you a reason for it?"

"I have the best of reasons, Sir Charles."

"And," pursued the baronet, looking me steadily in the face, "I know I can trust you, for you are a true and brave man. Still, I have a caution to give. Should nothing come of this, you are never to mention to any human being the suspicions I may shadow forth."

I told Sir Charles that he might depend upon me.

"Then," he resumed, "I will give you a bit of family history. George Copeland was my younger brother. His wife died three years after her marriage, leaving one child. George survived her only five years, and when he died he left his child in my charge. A sweet, precious child, was Clara Copeland, and I loved her as though she had been my own. Besides my brother, I had one sister, who married a naval officer of the name of Orton, by whom she had a son, who was called William. My brother left a very large property, amounting to more than a hundred thousand pounds, and by his will he bequeathed it as follows:—It was all to go to his daughter when she reached the age of nineteen years; but in the event of her dying before that time, the bulk of the fortune was to fall to William Orton, the son of his sister. Clara, if living, will be nineteen in a very few months. William Orton, who is nearly six years her senior, has sought her hand, but she would not listen to his suit. She did not love him; and, moreover, she had reason to believe that his character was not of the best kind. Thus you will see that Orton has had two chances in view for coming into possession of my brother's property."

"Is William Orton in London?" I asked.

"I am not sure," replied the baronet. "Tom is confident that he saw him in Finsbury Square the day before yesterday; but I had supposed that he was in Portsmouth."

"William Orton is about four-and-twenty?" said I, interrogatively; "tall, of good figure, with dark, curling hair, rather a heavy moustache, very bright eyes, a voice naturally low and soft, generally bearing himself with a free and reckless air?"

"You have hit him exactly," returned Sir Charles.

"One question more," I added. "What is his character?"

"I fear it is not good," said the baronet, shaking his head.

Without further delay, I gave a clear and detailed account of my adventure of the preceding night; and when I had concluded, Sir Charles started from his chair with clasped hands.

"It was Clara! It was Clara! I am sure of it!" he cried. "Oh, the villain must not succeed. We must find her at once. Have you any idea of the locality of the house where you left her?"

"Not the least," I answered.

"Have you any idea of the route you took?"

"No, sir."

"Merciful heavens! Something must be done. Can you suggest anything?"

"I think," said I, "that I can find that house this very night. I still own the horse that bore me through the wilds of the Punjab, and I believe he will carry me over that same track to-night that he took last night. At all events that is our best chance."

"Has your horse been on any other route since?"

"No, sir."

"Then I'll pit him against one half the policemen of London. By my life, Mark, we'll try the experiment; and let it be as soon as possible. Oh, you cannot know how anxious I am!"

After some reflection I suggested the following arrangement: I would be at my usual stand, near Blackfriars Bridge, and when it was fairly dark, Sir Charles and his valet, with such other help as he might select, should meet me there. This suited the baronet; and shortly afterwards I hurried away to attend to my share of the necessary arrangements.

It was past sundown when I had eaten my supper; and when I reached the stand with my cab it was half-past eight. In half an hour Sir Charles and Tom made their appearance, having left their carriage, in charge of two policemen, a short distance behind. My plan was to arrange matters just as they had been arranged on the previous night; so I had the baronet get into the cab, while Tom mounted by my side and took the reins. The policemen were to take the carriage and follow us. After we had started Tom sought to open a conversation, but I thought we had better keep silent.

"If we would have the horse repeat the jaunt of last night," said I, "we must give him every help."

Tom saw the force of my reasoning, and remained silent. My horse was allowed to pick his own way, and he did it without much faltering. Once or twice

he hesitated, as on the previous occasion; but a light word from me reassured him. Thus we had ridden some ten minutes, or more, when the horse stopped before an old building, in a dark, dirty street. Sir Charles leaped out from the cab, and asked if that was the place.

"No," said I, "this is the place where the lady was picked up."

Tom got down, under my directions, and ascended the steps to the door of the house, and then returned, and helped his master back into the cab, after which he resumed his seat by my side.

Again we started, with the reins evenly held, and my horse went on without faltering—on through narrow, crooked streets—around many corners—sometimes trotting, and sometimes walking,—until at length he stopped again; and this time I was the first to leap to the pavement, for I recognized the house into which I had seen the female carried. We waited until the two policemen came up; and after a hurried consultation one of them led the way up the steps, and rapped upon the door. In a little while the door was opened by an old woman, who sought to leap back and shut us out when she saw us; but the officer was too quick for her. She was seized, and threatened with a severe penalty if she made any noise.

"We are officers, my good woman; and if you know when you're well off, you'll keep quiet and answer me. We're after the young lady who was brought here last night."

The woman protested that no young lady had been brought there.

"Very well," said the policeman; "we'll take your lamp, and satisfy ourselves; and if you have any doors that are locked, you can open them for us, or you can leave them for us to open."

At this point Sir Charles whispered to one of the officers that he would rather the woman should not be arrested, as he did not wish to have the affair made public if it could possibly be avoided.

"Look 'e," continued the policeman, giving the woman a shake, "I know you very well. Don't you remember Inspector Rawlings? Didn't I pick you up in Church Lane not many months ago, eh? I tell ye, my fine woman, you'd better look sharp, or you'll find yourself picked up again. Now who leads the way, you or I? Speak quick."

"Indeed, sir," said the woman, trembling perceptibly, "I haven't had any hand in this. 'Tisn't my house, this isn't. A girl was brought here; but I had nothing to do with it."

"Lead us to her," returned Rawlings, "and if we find her safe and well, you shall go clear."

"D'ye mean it, sir?"

"Yes."

"Then come along, and be quick; for the man as brought her here may be back before a great while."

The woman led the way to an upper chamber in the back part of the house, where the lady Clara Copeland, pale and shivering, was found.

She was first clasped in her uncle's embrace, and then borne down to the street, and placed in the carriage. When she reached her home, she had but a meagre story to tell.

On the previous evening, while standing upon the doorstep, a man sprang forward and seized her, and stopped her mouth and nose with a napkin saturated with chloroform.

Before she could cry out her senses were gone, and when consciousness returned, she found herself alone in the chamber from which we had rescued her. She had not seen William Orton, though she firmly believed that he was at the bottom of the foul plot.

Clara was still very weak from the effects of the chloroform, but her guardian knew how to overcome that, and on the following day she was quite well.

Two days after this, Inspector Rawlings brought word to Sir Charles that William Orton had been in London, lurking about the gambling-houses; but that he had that morning taken his departure for Portsmouth.

I will only add, that I went to live with Sir Charles, where Tom and myself had things pretty much our own way.

In less than a year Clara was married to a man whom she had loved for a long time; and I am free to confess that both Tom and I drank a great deal of wine on the occasion.

William Orton, when last heard of, was in India; but whether he is now living or dead, I cannot tell. I can only pledge my word that there is no danger of his ever showing his face in London again.

S. J. R.

THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN AND THE INDIANS.—Accounts from Mexico state that a deputation of Kikapoa Indians were expected in the capital about the end of January. This tribe took refuge from the United States on the Mexican territory about twenty

years ago; and some difficulties having arisen as to the part of the country they are to occupy, their chiefs have resolved to appeal to the Emperor Maximilian in person. The deputation, which consists of six of the principal chiefs, had already arrived at Monterey, where they received assistance to enable them to continue their journey. These men are tattooed in red and green; their heads are decked with feathers; on their shoulders they wear the skins of animals, and their necks and arms are covered with coloured beads. On being presented to General Lopez at Monterey, the principal one said, "Our hearts are joyous at meeting you; the Great Spirit has created this land to be yours; the Kikapos are your brothers, and ask you for a portion." He then showed to the general a medal bearing the effigy of Louis XV., which, according to the traditions of the tribe, had been given to one of his ancestors by the Marquis de Montcalm, the last French governor of Canada.

COSTLY RELICS.—We give the following examples as illustrations of the large sums paid for relics. The ivory chain which Gustavus Vasa received from the town of Lubeck was sold in 1823 for the sum of 58,000 forins, not far short of £6,000. During the transport of the remains of Abolard and Heloise to the Petit Augustins, an Englishman offered 100,000 francs (£4,000) for one of the teeth of Heloise. Lord Shaftesbury paid, in 1816, for a tooth of Sir Isaac Newton £730. In 1820, the head of Descartes was absolutely "given away," as the phrase is, at the sale of Dr. Sourmon's cabinet, for 99 francs. Voltaire's cane was sold in Paris for 500 francs (£20); Rousseau's waistcoat for 949 francs, and his copper watch for 500. Kant's wig brought only 200 francs, whereas the wig of Sterne fetched in London 200 guineas. The hat worn by Napoleon at Eylau was, in 1855, carried off by M. Lacroix, from thirty-two competitors, for the sum of 1920 francs, about £77; while Sir Francis Burdett paid £500 for the two pens used in the signature of the treaty of Amiens.

WORK WITH AN AIM.

All persons should have an aim in life. Far too many there are who either have no definite object in view to attain unto in the future of their lives, or else are pursuing their course with a listlessness or with an entire want of earnestness that will for ever forbid the accomplishment of their purposes or the successful issue of their plans.

Life was given to man both to enjoy and to improve. Now the truest enjoyment is found in the doing, or in the consciousness of having done, a noble action, and the truest improvement is such as will add to the performance by its subject of the greatest number of worthy acts that he can be made capable of doing.

When we perform such deeds as these we avail ourselves of the best opportunities given us to promote our own happiness, and, whether they be those of love or of duty, the doing of these acts will increase our enjoyment of life in just that degree in which they are praiseworthy or truly noble and right. In short, we can find the greatest amount of happiness in doing good, and the greatest amount of good can be done only by our improving upon the advantages and cultivating the powers of mind or body which God has given us.

And this latter object of improvement, and through it the accomplishment of good, and consequent happiness to ourselves and others, can best be secured to us when we have a definite object of pursuit in life. So convinced are we of this fact that we believe the opposite to be also true—that, of all the sources of discontent and unhappiness existing in the world, that of an aimless life is one of the most prolific of misery.

We say, therefore, that we should work for a purpose, and, further, that we should work in earnest. Having found a work to do, we should then do it with our whole might, and the greatest incentive for us to do this is its absolute necessity, if we would insure success.

Success is the standard by which the talents, the merits, or the influence of a man is weighed, and the earnestness with which he pursues an object or aim is the measure of his success in life. For certain it is, that he who is most truly in earnest is ever the most truly successful, and that the person who refuses to labour with his might has turned away from ever from the golden grasp of fortune or the pleasing touch of fame.

It behoves all men, therefore, to be in earnest in all the affairs of their lives. And to no class of persons should these words have greater import than to the young men of our land to-day.

My friends and brothers, see to it that you both work with an aim, and work in earnest! Oh, there is a vast deal of right noble work that awaits us both now and in the grand future of our lives, which may

be worthily done by us if we but will do it. Let us awake, then, to the battle. The din of the conflict is all about us. The bugle's notes are calling us to the fray. Why sit we here all the day idle? Let us up and be doing, and that quickly and well. Ay, let us work for something and work earnestly—let that something be the good and happiness of mankind; and, when the sunset time of our life shall come, the bright, peaceful clouds that shall spot here and there the ethereal blue of our life-horizon shall all be touched and gilded as it were by the beautiful warm light of the sun of our life's success and happiness, for the victory—our victory—of earnestness and truth shall have been for ever won.

W. C. B.

INCONSTANCY.

It was a very pretty sight. The sun was sinking behind the blue hills, and shed a hale of departing light around the two figures who walked arm in arm. One was a little, fragile being, and contrasted well with the dark, handsome man at her side. A coquettish light gleamed in her eye, sometimes supplanted by a look of tenderness. She listened to his words.

"I have been patiently waiting, dearest, for the past month, and you cannot give me an answer yet."

The tone was half petulant, half pleading, and he bowed his head to catch her response.

"You know just how the matter stands, Horace; my father would be angry if he knew I countenance your visits without his knowledge; I fear you must go without a decided answer."

"Come, come, that's a pretty dismissal," he returned, much in the way he would have petted a wayward child, "but I must have a decided answer, little one, before I sail. It would grieve me sorely to leave you, with no claim on your thoughts."

"There's papa's bell ringing—I must say good-bye."

He took the little hand that had rested so trustfully on his arm, just once pressed his lips to her pure brow, and was gone.

"I'm coming, father," she cried, and met him as he came out to take his usual evening walk.

The sun had just gone down, but still it was light, and the stars were beginning to peep forth. It was a night of calm, quiet splendour, and they walked up and down, enjoying it silently. At length Mr. Priestly spoke:

"Lily, my child, I saw a stranger with you to-day. Tell me all you know of him."

She told him, though timidly, at first, how she had been riding alone one day, when he met her, and asked in the most gentlemanly way to be allowed to walk his horse by her side; how she had met him often since; that she had grown to look for his presence, to dread his absence.

"Don't be angry, papa," she continued. "I wanted to tell you long ago, but was too timid."

"I thought I had my child's full confidence; but let the past sleep. You may tell Mr. Russell to call on me, and I will decide whether he is a suitable friend for my little daughter or not."

They talked a little longer, and another good-night kiss was pressed on her brow, and she went to her own room.

But the maiden rested not, her anxious little head until a few lines were written to inform her lover of the success of her intercession, ready to be sent in the morning.

Mr. Russell had intended to leave England for Havanna, but he delayed his departure, and time passed almost without his cognizance. At length, after constant importunity, Mr. Priestly gave his rather reluctant consent to their engagement. Then Horace sailed, and after a quick voyage returned to claim the hand of his betrothed; and thus the beautiful Lily Priestly became the bride of Horace Russell. Important business again called him away, and he left his cherished flower in the safe keeping of her long-tried friend.

Another scene presents itself. It is a grand gala night in one of the palatial residences that grace a distant city. Most gorgeously furnished rooms these are, dear reader, in which we will wander awhile. It is a place of marvellous beauty. Bright jets of glowing light display loveliness everywhere. Pier-glasses, reaching from ceiling to floor, reflect again what is already so matchless. Bronzes, statuary, paintings of the old and new masters, and choice ornaments, perfect the scene. And then further off, where the sound of the music is lulled by the distance, and where it falls sweetest, is the loveliest spot of all. Here, those entwined in the rosy meshes of Cupid come, and weary ones, heated in the dance, cool their feverish pulses among so much refinement and quietude. Blooming flowers grow there in most luxuriant beauty; roses, whose blushes rival the beauties who bend over them;

mignonette, modest violets, and pure white japonicas, in short, every plant that can grow in hothouse beds here sends out its fragrance, and seemingly invites loiterers to its presence. And gushing jets of pure water, too, ever throw out their cooling influence on all around. The guests are coming in quickly, but none have yet penetrated its shades. Let us go out again.

There is a stir at the door now, and the hostess warmly welcomes the new comers, one, a beautiful dark-eyed girl, whose regal form is draped in raiment that sets forth to perfection her matchless splendour, and her mother, whose smile and voice are well-nigh heavenly. She is one who is in the world, but not of the world. The gaieties of life present no charms to her, but her daughter must not bloom unseen, and she attends with all a mother's deepest affection.

The rooms are crowded; the last carriage has just rolled to the door, and two gentlemen of aristocratic bearing alight.

"We are late, Horace, but I think welcome, nevertheless."

And truly they were. Festivity was at its height, but they soon found places in the gay circle, and all went merry as a marriage-bell.

"Have you seen any one to please your fastidious taste, here, to-night?"

"Yes, one. Who is that very brilliant lady, with the crimson flowers in her dress and hair?"

"Oh, that is Miss Isabelle Montcalm. I danced the last set with her."

"Were you not enchanted?"

"Not at all, I can assure you; I admire much more that little creature by her side, Miss Addie Simmons; the dark one has too much of the stand-off-if-you-please manner, to suit me. See Layton talking with her now; he looks like a subject petitioning his queen."

"Just the hauteur I admire above all things," the other returned, and after a moment's pause, added, "Introduce me, will you?"

"To the little one?"

"Fshaw, no! one head is quite filled with her already; you would be jealous."

Through the gentleman of the house they obtained the coveted introduction. Horace Russell, for it was he, bowed low. He asked the pleasure of Isabelle's hand in the waltz that was forming; and soon after they found their way to the nook I have so imperfectly described.

Long they lingered, for the stillness was seductive, and quickly sped the swift-footed hours. The wily charmer knew well the proud heart that beat in the fair girl's bosom, and well did he use his power. He was startled at times with the depth of expression that gleamed in her luminous eyes; her thoughts enchanted him, and there were aspirations and feelings freely breathed forth that told the nobility of her soul. He found, indeed, that the pearl within was even more precious than the casket.

He lingered by her side until the guests began to depart, placed more carefully her wrappings around her, and asked that the very agreeable acquaintance already begun might be continued. With all a son's tenderness he assisted her mother to her carriage, and bowed with all a cavalier's grace as they thanked him for his kindness.

His ride home was a silent one. His companion understood his mood well, and left him undisturbed. A quiet "good-night" was returned at the door of their rooms, and Horace locked himself within, to think.

"Quite a contrast to the other, by Jove!" he said, bitterly, and he drew his wife's miniature from its resting-place and viewed it. "I see plainly enough now that I never loved that child. My fancy was stirred, nothing more. She could never make me feel as that one has to-night."

He considered himself the soul of manliness and honour, but his feelings went out in conscious abandonment towards the one he had just left, regardless of the stern facts which conscience whispered.

Wild, surging thoughts rushed through his brain; first, "She must be mine," was the thought. Then came the memory of the fair one far away, all his own. Long, long he pondered, and then, with a muttered imprecation, he ground the miniature beneath his heel, saying:

"She shall never bind me!"

His face told his resolve, without aught else; and forcing back every good emotion, he fell asleep in very weariness, murmuring the name of his enchantress.

A few nights after he met Miss Montcalm again. She was even more charming to his senses than before, and his blind passion found food only in her presence. And she, all unconscious of his character, was learning daily to look up to him in all things; she sang only the songs he admired, wore only what pleased his taste, and looked to him for all approbation and praise.

With Mrs. Montcalm he failed somewhat in his arts. She did not always like his manner; there was sometimes a shade upon his brow which she feared innocence could not associate with. Religion was unknown to him, and he was ill at ease when the subject was broached. She saw that her child was daily becoming a part of that man—ay, becoming his second self, as far as her guileless soul would permit. He attended her at opera, balls, places of pleasure of every kind. He was the first to know, almost by intuition, her slightest wish, and he rendered her all these delicate attentions that so unconsciously pave a way for affection to show itself.

But he could not win such a coveted prize without opposition. One suitor, in particular, offered to Isabelle services quite as valuable and delicate as his own. Sinclair Layton was in every way worthy, but it only aroused the demon in Russell's soul, and he determined to win or die. They did not hide their feelings; angry discussions and marked contempt characterized their actions toward each other, while neither would disclose the cause.

"Whom do you expect this evening, Isabelle?" asked Mrs. Montcalm, as her daughter entered her room.

"Mr. Russell, mamma."

"My child, I do not like that man. He may be all he seems, yet my heart misgives me. May the Father of the fatherless guide you in your choice! But there is the bell. Give my respects to Mr. Russell. I trust I am judging harshly."

Isabelle pressed a warm kiss of affection upon her mother's brow, and then went down to meet the visitor.

With music and pleasant conversation the evening sped by quickly. They began to talk on more serious matters after a while, and at length Russell broached the subject nearest his thoughts, and asked for her hand.

Did no thought of another eve such as this sweep through his brain, as he slipped a brilliant diamond ring on her finger, and pressed the first kiss on her lips?

He had successfully urged her to keep their engagement secret, as he feared her mother's prejudice, and Layton's open wrath. He was in the zenith of earthly happiness; but he had sown the wind, and would soon reap the whirlwind.

The fair, frail blossom far away was withering fast. A crushed miniature was all that remained of her in Russell's memory, and he had crushed the heart quite as effectually, by his prolonged absence and silence. At last she received a paper with the notice of her husband's death underlined, and, soon after, a letter, purporting to be the last he had ever written.

It was a beautiful letter, breathing love and faith in every line.

It told her to go on in the path of duty, to soothe her father's footsteps to the grave, and not to grieve for the writer, who, ere she received it, would be sleeping far away.

Her heart was well-nigh broken; almost in vain did her loving father offer consolation; but at last she rallied, and moved about again with a white face and a chastened smile.

"Father, I would like to see his grave once, and then die."

Her slightest wish was law, and they prepared to sail. She bore the voyage well, the desire to kneel by his side even in death, supported her, and she landed, weak but hopeful. The advertisement was very imperfect, not mentioning where his body was interred, and they instituted inquiry, but at first without success.

"My daughter, you confine yourself too closely to your room; let me get a box in the theatre, and we will hear Rachel."

The box was engaged, and languidly she waited for the curtain to rise. Rachel came forth, brilliant as usual, and almost matchless; her theatrical triumphs were ringing everywhere, and they could not praise her too highly. Bouquets were flung from every side, with many a glittering bauble pendant. In the middle of the second act the box opposite was occupied. Many a jargonette was levelled that way, notwithstanding the attractions of the stage. Lily looked, too; long and earnestly her gaze was riveted; and then, convulsively clutching her father's arm, she murmured hoarsely,—

"Father, look, look! the very face and form! It must be him!"

She leaned forward, in her agitation regardless of all else. Mr. Priestly was powerfully agitated, for he feared reason would leave its throne; but he commanded his voice to say,—

"My darling child, pray be calm; shall we go now?"

She gave one more searching glance opposite, as if to be satisfied, and, drawing her cloak closer on her shoulders, with a firm step she left the theatre; she was a child before, but now a woman.

She saw it all; he had tired of her, had seen and loved the brilliant, beautiful creature who now sat by his side, and had invented this strategy to completely deceive her.

Why did she not go mad, with so many raging thoughts swelling her bosom? What right had that woman to be there? Why should she sit by his side, listen to his voice, feel his soft breath on her cheek, and receive that attention which should be her own? But she mentally vowed that the deceived one should be no longer deceived; she would expose his infidelity and wickedness, though it cost her life. Her father spoke:

"My child—"

"Do not be alarmed, my father; God has given me strength in my hour of need."

They talked of the wonderful event that had so marked that evening as they drove home, and Lily parted from her father without disclosing any of the hidden sorrow that well-nigh burned out her life. She had a severe trial to bear, a bitter cross to take up—desertion and loneliness.

Their coachman had been instructed to follow Russell to the lady's residence; and the next morning he drove to the door with Lily, and the deceived maiden and deserted wife met.

Calmly Isabelle listened to the strange tale, and dispassionately heard all that proved her lover to be perjured and false. And then as sisters they reasoned how they might punish him without injuring themselves.

Russell sat in his apartments, lazily enjoying a fragrant Havana, when a perfumed billet was handed him.

"Your wife desires an interview at Miss Isabelle Montcalm's residence immediately."

"LILY RUSSELL."

He gazed at it until his very eye-strings felt as though they would break. All motion was suspended, and he sat for a time speechless and still. He arose at length, as if shaking off a hideous nightmare; and in a short time had departed by railway, far away from the scene of his anticipated joy.

They waited, but he came not. Isabelle determined to say nought to her mother of Horace Russell's history, and with a slightly altered face and manner she went on her daily way. Lily was called to bear another heartrending trial, in the death of her only parent, and then took up her abode in the house of her friend. Mrs. Montcalm never knew her real position, but was glad of her society as an early friend of her daughter's. Isabelle again went out into company. Her trial was so light in comparison with that of the fair one who secluded herself from the world, that she could only be thankful for her escape.

Layton continued his attentions more sedulously than ever; she saw now his high worth in comparison with the serpent who had beguiled her, and when he asked for her love she gave it to him. He knew of her previous engagement, but it mattered not; and again she was betrothed.

E. G.

A QUEEN'S REVENGE.—Now the queen was known to all to be a resolute determined woman. She was learned, could read and write Persian and Arabic, was a princess of Delhi by birth and a queen by marriage—was such a woman to allow a base-born slave to step between her and her lord, she being the mother of the king's children? When she once expressed a desire for anything, she always got it, no matter how opposed. If it was not granted at once, she neither eat nor drank till either the request was granted, or at least a solemn promise was made to grant it. But she was wise, too, and never injured the kingdom by her demands. Sole lord of the king's heart, mother of his children, was she to allow a rival to carry off his affections from her? Certainly not. The attendant in question, I forget her name, was one afternoon sleeping soundly, fatigued by exercise, and overcome by the sultriness of the day. The apartment in which she slept was at the end of a gallery leading from the queen's private rooms to those of public reception. The queen accidentally passed by, and saw her there asleep. The attendant was a handsome girl, full grown, with a fine figure, and through some accident had never been married. It was whispered in the palace that she would one day be mother of a royal child, whether truly or falsely I do not know. The queen passed on and said nothing till she came to her own apartment. She then called to her one of her most trusted servants—an old woman who had been with her from her maidenhood, who had come with her from Delhi. How the thing was managed afterwards I do not know, but soon all the palace was in an uproar, roused by the screams of the attendant who had been sleeping a few minutes before, dreaming, perhaps, of the affection of a king.

She had been sleeping, I heard, with face and neck uncovered, the usual muslin veil being thrown aside in consequence of the heat; and some description of fire-work, or explosive substance, had been let off so close to her as to burn her severely on the face and neck. The queen was very sorry for the pain she suffered, and was doing all she could to alleviate it when the king came in. A dark scowl was on his face. The girl was removed by his orders, in order that proper medical aid might be obtained. She was long ill. Her beauty was clean gone for ever, and she was soon forgotten. I do not know what became of her afterwards.—"Elihu Jan's Story." By William Knighton, L.L.D.

RAILWAY ACCOMMODATION IN AMERICA.

THE American railway system has now and then been held up to the "Britisher" as an example of perfection. We cut the following from a New York contemporary; it places matters in a slightly different light: "Considering the fact that the Americans of all people, live the most on railroads, they get the least comfort from them. The unpunctuality, irregularity, want of regard to the public convenience, discomfort, and lack of speed, on a great number of our American railroads, is a disgrace to any civilized country."

"It might be supposed, that of all communities in the world, the merchants of a city like New York, rapid and enterprising, to whom time is everything, would secure speed above all in their means of communication. And yet we venture to say that scarcely a railroad around New York can put a merchant, living twenty miles out, in Wall Street, in less time than an hour and three quarters—thus compelling him to spend three hours and a half on the road every day! How long would the London merchants endure such rates of travel into the city? Then consider the discomfort of our daily trains from and to the city, where it could be thoroughly known beforehand how many passengers would probably need accommodation; and yet how many are forced continually to stand six or eight miles!

"The heating arrangements, too, are the most unwholesome and disagreeable. Sixty passengers are shut up in a box, without ventilation, and a great stove blazing out heat at each end; but in such a way that one's head is always burning, while the feet are half-freezing. It is not to be wondered at that doctors refer much of our prevalent diphtheria and sore-throat and bronchitis to these furnace-boxes. When will that benevolent inventor arise who will heat railroad cars by steam-pipes beneath the feet, or some similar contrivance?

"Beside these *désagréments*, there is, with some roads, the leaving the passengers in the upper part of the city, three miles from their destination, and letting them find their way in the cold to their place of business; the want, on some roads, of printed labels for luggage—leaving a faint chalk mark to determine whether a trunk goes a hundred miles one way, or fifty miles the other; the lack of comfortable first-class *coupé* cars for families to make long journeys in, and the absence of that very simple English institution—the "parcel-office." Here, if a lady comes into a shop, or if a gentleman wishes to market or make a purchase, all they can do is to have their parcels sent to the express office in the railroad station (as the express baggage-room refuses to receive them), and there they remain till called for, costing twenty-five cents a parcel for storage, sometimes as much as the package is worth.

"In any English railroad-station there is always a little parcel-office connected with the baggage-room, where any bundles can be left, and from which they can be obtained by the payment of twopence each. It may be urged that these are small matters for great railroad companies to look into; but, after all, the comfort of life is made up of just these small things, and the whole machinery of living in a great city like New York ought to be as complete and regular in its working as in any European city."

Snow on Roofs.—The rather heavy falls of snow which we have had in the last few weeks have, as usual, exhibited some of the weak points in the arrangement and construction of roofs. Both high and low pitches seem to have their peculiar fallings. If the angle of the roof is very flat, and there is a strong wind, the snow is liable to accumulate on one side of it to a great depth, while the other side is almost free. This uneven weighting is a severe test for some of the slight and badly tied trusses which are so often used even for wide spans, and might lead to serious mischief. If, on the other hand, the pitch is steeper, the snow may rest on it till it becomes heavy enough to slide down the surface, and to shoot off in small avalanches to the eaves. Woe to the passer-by who is overtaken by one! Where there is

a parapet instead of an eaves-gutter, the annoyance is transferred from the people outside to those inside the building. The parapet gets filled up with snow, and if there comes a sudden thaw, it overflows the gutters, and seeps through the roof and ceiling. Perhaps the best way to avoid both these evils is to adopt the eaves-gutter with an iron railing running along it, of which there is a good instance at St. Giles' National Schools. The railing, the pattern of which is rather close, effectually prevents loose slates from falling off into the street, and is a protection to men at work on the roof. It is not capable of being choked up with snow, like a brick parapet, and yet it does not allow of heavy masses coming down together. It breaks them up as they push their way through it, so that they arrive at the pavement as flakes and dust, and not as an overwhelming mass of perhaps half a hundred-weight in one lump.

A LION FIGHT IN INDIA.

An officer of the British army relates the following amusing account of a scene he witnessed while stationed in India.

Business led me to Lucknow, and I carried a letter of introduction to our resident minister, who received me with great cordiality.

"I suppose," he said, in the course of conversation, you would like to see the curiosities of the place?"

"It would afford me much pleasure," I answered.

"Well, then, among other things, you must visit the palace, see the King of Oude, get permission to go through his menagerie, and perhaps, if you are fortunate enough to please his majesty, he may honour you with an exhibition of a wild-beast fight."

"Nothing would please me better, your excellency."

"I will do what I can for you, then, major; but much will depend upon yourself; for though I have the right and power to present you at court, it must be as the king wills about the rest. I must tell you, to begin with, that I am not in special favour with his majesty; he fears rather than likes me; he naturally views me in the light of a restraint; he governs his subjects, and I in a measure govern him; he cannot do altogether as he pleases, because English law bears upon him through my office; and exactly in that degree is the incumbent of that office distasteful to him. He professes, however, to like Englishmen: in fact, the principal officers of his majesty's household are British subjects. He is very eccentric, and loves with great warmth, and hates with great bitterness; and just as the whim takes him will be your success or failure."

He then made me acquainted with the court etiquette of India, and appointed a day for the presentation. Among other things, I was to make the king a present in gold, say five or ten mohurs, as a mere matter of form. These were to be placed on a fine linen handkerchief, the handkerchief laid on the palm of my right hand, and the right hand laid in the palm of my left hand, and in this manner I was to hold them forth to his majesty. Should he merely bow, without touching them, I was to hope for nothing more; but should he approach, smile, place his left hand under mine, and touch the gold pieces with his right, then I was to consider myself in high favour.

Of course I waited the eventful moment with a good deal of curiosity, and am happy to say I met with all the success I hoped for.

In the language of a courtier, his majesty was graciously pleased to notice me in a kindly manner; and seeing this, my new friend, the resident, hinted that I was a hunter of some reputation, and a zoologist of some fame.

"Indeed!" returned his majesty, who spoke English almost as well as his native tongue; "then he must visit my menagerie."

"He will be delighted," was the answer.

"Perhaps he would like to witness a fight?"

"Your majesty could not give him a greater pleasure!"

"Then he shall be gratified," smiled the Indian monarch. "Let me see—this is Friday—say Tuesday next. I have two famous lions. He shall see them in combat—a rare sight. It will take three days to prepare them, for they must be rendered furious by being deprived of food and water. So be it on Tuesday next, your excellency. Meantime, he must be shown over my palace and gardens, park and menagerie, and your excellency must bring him round to dine with me."

Rasht-n-deen (the son and successor of Ghan-n-deen) at this time King of Oude, a portion of northern Hindoostan, was a straight, tall, slender, swarthy man, in the very prime and vigour of life, with regular, almost handsome features, and jet black eyes and hair.

The general expression of his countenance, when in good humour, was pleasing and prepossessing, though there were certain lines that betokened strong,

selfish passions, craftiness, and even treachery; but these, when their possessor was not excited or roused to anger, would be likely to escape the notice of any one except a close observer and an experienced physiognomist.

His income was enormous, and, besides this, his economical father had hoarded up an immense fortune, which he was lavishly squandering in all sorts of extravagance and dissipation. His palace stretched for an immense distance along one bank of the narrow Goomty river, and was richly, even gorgeously furnished—the eye, in many cases, becoming lost and bewildered among columns, statues, paintings, chandeliers, arms of the field and chase, and gilded and inlaid furniture of every description.

There were gardens, rich in all the fruit, shrubbery, and flowers of a tropical clime; beautiful fountains, sending their silvery spray high into the heated air; and artificial ponds of fairy-like appearance, filled with the finny tribe of every colour and variety.

Along the opposite bank of the Goomty stretched the royal park, with perhaps the largest zoological collection in the world—elephants, rhinoceroses, camels, lions, tigers, cheetahs, buffaloes, lynxes, stags, antelopes, Persian cats, Chinese dogs; and in fact animals of every genus and species in the known world, to be counted by scores if not by hundreds.

Some faint idea of this vast collection may be formed, when I state that of elephants alone, this Indian monarch possessed upwards of a hundred and fifty.

I have said nothing of his harem of beautiful women, one of the finest in Asia, nor of the eunuchs, slaves, officers, keepers, and attendants, male and female, who might be numbered by hundreds and thousands, all paid and supported by royalty.

About three miles from Lucknow there was a park, palace, or court-yard safely fenced in by bamboo, and overlooked by a gallery, which had been expressly constructed and arranged for the king and his court to witness the contests of the different wild beasts—a barbarous amusement in which the Majesty of Oude took great delight—and here, at the appointed time, I found myself in company with my friend the resident and the royal suite.

The king, who ordinarily wore the plain black suit of an English gentleman, on this occasion appeared in his royal robes, of oriental style, made of cloth of silver and gold, with a magnificent crown upon his head, and glittering from head to foot with jewels of value.

His chair of state, rich in decorations, and covered with its crimson umbrella-shaped canopy, had been placed for him; and the moment he took his seat, five beautiful young ladies, splendidly dressed in the Turkish style, arranged themselves around and behind him, and began to fan him.

It was a very hot day, and I was led to fancy there might be worse things than changing with the "Refuge of the World," as the King of Oude is called in his native tongue.

As soon as we had all taken our seats where we could have a fine view of the arena below, two cages were brought and placed opposite to each other, to the right and left of us, in the verandah that ran all around the inclosure beneath us, and in each of these cages was a large formidable lion.

Through the bamboo grating, or paling, and the bars of their cages, these lions could see each other, and that was what was wanted to prepare them for the fight.

They stared, frowned, growled, showed their teeth, roared, and lashed themselves around their narrow limits with great fury; and when this had been permitted long enough to make it certain their rage would lead them to a fierce and deadly contest, the king smiled, rubbed his hands, and said to the resident, who was seated on his right:

"They will not talk us, your excellency."

"I think not, your majesty," answered the British minister.

"Is your excellency disposed to bet?" asked the king.

"A small sum, if it so please your majesty."

"On which beast—Tinga or Coodah?"

"Your majesty shall choose."

"A hundred gold mohurs, then, on Coodah!" said the king, with considerable animation.

"I accept the bet, your majesty, though I am ignorant as yet which is which."

"Coodah is the lion in the left-hand cage."

The resident bowed.

"Another hundred gold mohurs on Coodah," added the king, addressing me.

I had previously been instructed to take whatever bet the king might offer—the probability being that the amount would not be claimed by the royal head of Oude, even if won—or, if claimed and paid, that twice the sum would be returned in the shape of a present; so I bowed, smiled, and replied:

"If it so please your majesty."

At this the king clapped his hands, as a signal to the keepers to let the beasts into the enclosure, and the next moment, as if by magic, a bamboo gate in front of each cage flew up, and the iron door of each door flew open.

Seeing themselves face to face, with nothing between them, each beast now leaped boldly into the arena, with a cat-like motion, and then stopping, with a low, deadly growl, they looked fiercely and warily at each other, shook their huge manes, and shied off, each to the right, with a few quick, curious, and suspicious glances at every object and person around them, evidently feeling themselves in a novel and dangerous situation.

The keepers lost no time in closing the doors of their cages and dropping the bamboo gates, and the interest of all parties now became so intense that the silence was death-like.

The lions were so well matched in size and appearance, that I could not have made a choice between them had I been permitted to do so. They were both beautiful specimens of the king of beasts, and were in fine condition.

When they stood erect, with their long bushy manes falling gracefully down each side of their bold, half-human looking faces, their short, stout legs firmly planted on the earth, which they seemed to tread with disdain, their tawny bodies sloping off towards their long tails, which they waved with dignity, their large, fiery eyes glaring upon each other—they did indeed look majestic and terrible. It was a combination of beauty, grace, agility, and strength.

They began their manoeuvres by circling toward each other. Each went to the right and began to move round, in such a manner that they soon changed sides, each being opposite the other's cage, though a few feet nearer each other than when they started. Then they stopped and stared each other in the face, uttered low, rumbling growls, like distant thunder, showed their formidable teeth, and resumed their circling manoeuvres.

This was continued for some ten or fifteen minutes, amid a most intense and almost breathless excitement.

Suddenly, when at last only a few feet divided them, there issued, simultaneously from each throat, such an appalling roar, that I bounded clear from my seat, and more than one person uttered an involuntary exclamation of terror. At the same instant, I saw each beast lifted from the earth, as if by some explosive power, and hurled toward the other.

They struck in mid air, came down together, and rolled over and over like a huge ball. Already they were in the death-grapple; already each was gripping at the other's throat with his formidable teeth, and tearing the other with his terrible claws; but the motions were so quick that nothing could be distinguished, save that now one was uppermost, and now the other, as they rolled now this way and now that.

"Bravo!" cried the king, clapping his hands with delight; "this is sport, indeed!"

"I never witnessed a more exciting contest!" said my friend.

"Nor I!" was my rejoinder, as my breath now came quick with excitement.

For the space of, perhaps, five minutes, the combat was maintained in the manner related, and with such an equality of strength and skill that it was impossible for any one to tell which would be the victor. From the moment of the first shock and embrace, they had not separated for an instant, and they were still fighting furiously, though it was now plain to see that both were beginning to feel the fatigue of such a constant physical strain, and were fast growing weaker from the loss of blood, which, in their rapid change of position, had been thrown all over them, and trailed and puddled on the ground.

"Bravo! bravo!" shouted the king; "this is glorious!"

As if the lions heard him, and were anxious to win further approbation from their royal master, they now rose upon their hind feet, still tugging at each other with their claws.

The shortness and stoutness of their necks, together with their bushy manes and equality in strength and position, rendered it impossible for either to cut the jugular of the other, and it was evident that, unless one should be favoured by accident, it would result in a drawn battle.

At length they separated, as if by mutual consent; each retired a few feet, panting, drooping, bleeding, and each crouched down on his belly, facing his antagonist, and seemed to watch for some favourable chance of taking him at advantage.

The king issued some command in his native tongue, and almost instantly two long, heated rods were thrust through the bamboo paling, on either side of the enclosure, and directed against the bodies of the panting beasts. Both sprang up together, but one turned and looked behind him. It was a fatal mistake. With a bound like lightning, the other struck fairly upon his

back, overthrew him in an instant, and fastened upon his throat in such a manner that he became perfectly helpless.

"Coodah is beaten!" cried half-a-dozen excited voices, in English and Hindostanee.

"He is!" exclaimed the king; and instantly gave orders to force off the victor with the heated rods.

They were quickly applied, but too late. The strong, sharp teeth of Tingo had already pierced the jugular vein and torn open the throat of his antagonist; and when the keepers forced him to withdraw, which he did with the proud air of a conqueror, Coodah lay gasping and bleeding to death.

The king did not seem well pleased at the result; but he sent me his bet the next day, which amounted to about one hundred and sixty pounds.

E. B.

THE Wurttemberg Chamber of Deputies has just pronounced in favour of the abolition of the punishment of death by a majority of 56 to 27.

THE Mexican Eagle is the decoration which the Emperor Maximilian has just created. The eagle has not been long incubating, and must be a very small bird still to present, with a grand cordon to secure it, to the Emperors of the French, of Austria, of Brazil, and Kings of the Belgians, of Portugal, and of Sweden.

ICELAND.—One of the chief attractions in Iceland travelling is the intense brightness of colour. I have before mentioned the vivid clearness of the atmosphere, but even when the sky is clouded, brilliant hues prevail. Yonder hill of green grass, mixed with red, seems a mountain of blooming heather, but the scarlet tints are of burnt scorria. Often and often have I thought that the sun was shining partially on distant hill-tops, and only after closer observation could bring myself to be convinced that the apparent sunshine was fawn-coloured ash or sand, and that the seeming shadow with which it contrasted was dark-grey pumice-stone.—*Travels by Unbra.*

ALETHE.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEAL KAVANAGH, with a sword across his knees and a revolver in his hand, sat, awaiting anxiously the events of the night. The major, similarly armed, occupied an apartment on the opposite side of the bungalow, a prey to the same fears and feelings. Kavanagh could hear, at intervals, the slow and heavy tread of the elephant, as, guided by Barnabas, he made the circuit of the house. Notwithstanding the excitement he had endured the past day and night, strange to say, his wound did not suffer by it, nor was there any recurrence of the feverish symptoms. The thought of Miss Macgregor might have acted as an anodyne; soothing the turmoil of his mind and counteracting the effects of apprehension.

Now and then, shading his eyes with his hand, he looked out upon the dim and silent grounds, which, hour after hour, still remained dim and silent.

A slight scratch upon the floor, a muffled sound, a footfall that was like the tread of an ambushed cat, caused Kavanagh to look toward the door. The first objects he beheld were two shining lights, like two spheres of glass, with lightning shining through them.

Those two shining lights drew and kept his attention for a moment—they were so brilliant, so unexpected, and so wonderful.

Breaking from this fascination with a soldier's promptness, he took cognizance of more than a pair of intense eyes. He perceived a nearly full-grown tiger looking him in the face! There was more of curiosity than fierceness in the sleek and shining creature's expression. It seemed doubtful whether to advance or retreat. It looked as if a kind word would bring it to his feet. He knew at once that the animal must be tame; but he had never seen it before, and wondered whence it came. Its beauty and grace reminded him of an elegant woman.

He tried to feel that he was a soldier, and said, with tolerable firmness:

"Come here, my beauty; come here!"

Like a prudent man, however, Neal Kavanagh cocked his revolver, not fully assured of the intentions of his magnificent visitor.

"All right!" said a good-humoured voice. "All right, my boy!"

Barnabas Hutton, who had modestly stood a little back, out of sight, now advanced into the room with Upas.

"You came near giving me a fright, Barnabas," said Kavanagh. "If I hadn't been an English soldier, I believe I should have fainted like a schoolgirl. What have you got hold of now, my friend?"

"You can see for yourself, Lieutenant. It's a

Hindoo arrangement altogether. A sentimental, picture-painted native philanthropically presented it to me a short time ago. Better nor a dog, isn't she? You musn't say 'scat' to her, however. Scat don't seem to agree with her. You know the kind o' gammon that goes down with females, don't ye, lieutenant?" Barnabas stretched his good-natured mouth into a smile that divided his face into two sections. "Scat a woman, and see what'll come on't! Well, this mink'n' creature is powerfully similar. She is. Yes!"

"You astonish me, Barnabas! Are you sure that this animal's perfectly safe?" replied Kavanagh, unconsciously pushing his chair back as Hutton drew near.

"To tell you the plain truth, my boy, I shouldn't be the least bit surprised if she should spring right at ye, and tear ye all to bits. I shouldn't. No! On the contrary, lieutenant, I rather come in as an experimenter than otherwise. If the animal isn't docile, I want to know it before she does much mischief, ye know. If she pulls you apart, 'twouldn't be like takin' one o' the girls," said Mr. Hutton.

"I appreciate your motive, Barnabas, but I can't look upon it as a favour. Take away this lithe and agile beauty, with her opal eyes. She don't agree with me, I'm afraid," answered Kavanagh, eyeing Upas distrustfully.

"The whole secret," added Barnabas, "lies in a nutshell. You're to speak softly, smile tender, and stroke her head gently; which does the business. Leastways, it has, so far; but heaven only knows how long 'twill last!"

Barnabas squinted at his new piece of property with more doubt than confidence; then, with evident uncertainty, said:

"Come to your proprietor, Upas. Come, you magnificent fish-ant she!"

Contrary to the expectations of Kavanagh, the tigress went and rubbed her head against Hutton's legs.

"By George!" quoth Barnabas, "isn't it a gammonin' kitten?"

"It is singularly tame," observed Kavanagh. "How came it in your possession?"

"A Hindoo enterprise," replied Barnabas, "Tilac, the tiger-tamer. Painted native. Menagerum on one cheek and deadly snakes on t'other. Found baby-tigress in valley of Bohun Upas, stupefied. Took it home and renovated it. Took a skin for it. Gein' away. Give her to me. And that's the whole story. Took her up here to introduce her, and see what you thought on't; though, I'll be hanged if I didn't think it was about an even chance that she'd claw your t'other arm."

Barnabas turned his twinkling eyes on Upas, with an expression exceedingly problematical.

"I never was a miser," he returned, in a genial glow. "I never wanted to lay claim to more nor belonged to me. I allers liked you, my boy; and I've no doubt but I should liked your folk accordin', if I'd known 'em; on account of which, as a small momentum of my esteem, and as a mark of my friendship, allow me to present you this here—"

"No, no, my dear Barnabas!" interposed Kavanagh, greatly alarmed, "don't make such a sacrifice."

"No sacrifice at all! and it's a luxury I can well afford to part with," responded Barnabas, with a comical twitching of the corners of his mouth. "It was the wish of the generous native who gave the property to me, that it might remain in the country; but I think o' movin', my boy; I think on't serious, and I don't care to take my riches with me."

"All of which," laughed Kavanagh, "I fully appreciate, and beg of you to accept every expression of gratitude you can conveniently think of. I hope the time may come when I may be able to repay this kindness."

Just then the tigress, with exceeding grace and persuasiveness, looked up at Barnabas.

"Well! well! I don't know!" he muttered.

"This is a trifle beyond my faculties. There may be some'at in this varmint. Who knows? Upas, my beauty, are you true, or a dazzin' hypocrite?"

He patted the creature on the head. She seemed infinitely pleased.

While he was doing this, a shadow fell on the floor. It was not a large shadow, but a symmetrical one; and Barnabas recognized it. He knew the turn of the shoulders, the carriage of the head, the smallness of the waist. The shadow said, "Alethe!" and Alethe it was.

Barnabas turned from the shadow to the substance. People who have been in love know how quickly this is done. It don't take long; and Barnabas beheld, in an instant, the dreamy maiden of his thoughts. He saw her as he had never seen her before.

Alethe stood on the threshold, with face so pale that it was whiter than Ida's; with lips slightly apart; with nostrils dilated; with eyes wide open and fixed, and her slight and sylph-like figure thrown forward in an attitude of wonder.

Both Kavanagh and Hutton changed at once in mood. The mute earnestness of the girl made them immediately forgetful of themselves and their conversation. They waited for her to speak. She could not at once, it was manifest, command her voice; but presently the hesitating organs obeyed the will. Raising an interrogatory finger, she pointed at the tigress.

"Mr. Barnabas! Mr. Barnabas!" she gasped. "How came that creature here?"

"She walked right along on her feet," answered Hutton. "There isn't much doubt about her style o' travelin'."

"Where did you get her?" queried Alethe, her pallor not yet subsiding.

"A generous native presented her to me, without fee, recompense, or reward—a prodigal son, Miss 'Lethe, a wastin' his substance."

"A perilous gift! It is the gift of death! This creature has but one will; and that is the will of her master, who exercises over her a secret power. Mr. Barnabas, his name is Upas; and it is as ready to its master's enemies as that tree is to the human race."

"It don't look dangerous," said Barnabas, glancing down at Upas with obvious distrust. "Don't you see it's nothin' but a kitten, Miss 'Lethe? There isn't nothin' cross about her. There isn't. No! Observe how she puts up her head to be noticed. 'Twould be a pretty lapdog for a lady. Shouldn't wonder if I was to give her to you, one of these days. Hang me, if you wouldn't be a nice couple!"

"Alethe," said Kavanagh, "your manner and words are startling. Tell us what you know of this animal."

The girl clasped her hands, and said:

"Upas! Upas!"

The tigress turned quickly, and went to her. Instantly, she began to caress her. Kavanagh noticed that she looked straight into the animal's eyes, manipulating the glossy head with her hands with a continual backward motion.

The bright orbs at first flamed with excitement, but gradually softened till they were gentle as a woman's. Neither Hutton nor the lieutenant attempted to interrupt her.

Upas grew meek and submissive. With a sigh, she stretched herself at Alethe's feet, and presently, closing her now tender eyes, dropped asleep.

"Are you sein' that?" asked Barnabas, who was by this time in a high state of admiration. "Are you sein' that, lieutenant? Isn't she a witch, my boy?"

"She has witching ways, I confess," responded Kavanagh, smiling—yet not much less surprised than his friend.

"That piece of property," added Hutton, "grows more valuable. Tigers was low an hour ago; but they'll be all right by mornin'."

"Mr. Barnabas," said Alethe, sweetly, "will you leave Upas to me?"

"In my first and last will and testament, I'll leave her to ye, willin'. I'll give ye a quit-claim deed, to have and to hold, to keep and to cultivate, now and for ever, you and your heirs and assigns, and so on and so forth—all accordin' to law and in due form—the tigress above and the tigress aforesaid being repeated some forty times; or, at least, often enough to make the whole thing a perfect puzzle to anybody of common-sense. Yet hold on a bit, Brownie. If there's any danger in that animal; if there's any animosity in that cub; if there's any scratch and bite in that kitten; if there's any bite and tear in that shiny beauty—I wouldn't leave it in your possession, or alone with it, for all the pearls in Ingy."

Hutton's countenance grew serious as he went on:

"If there's any trick about this; if there's any Hindoo cunning! at the bottom on't; if there's any craft at the beginnin', or middle, or end on't—jest let me know it. Speak out, my little girl; open your sweet mouth, my pet. Don't go for takin' all the risk o' this business on your own pretty shoulders; don't go for exposin' yourself for me, or him, or her, or for anybody. If you expose yourself, expose yourself for yourself."

"Do not be afraid, Mr. Barnabas. I know this creature. I held her in my arms when she was no larger than a cat. I know wherein she is weak and wherein she is strong. I can subdue her. I trust not Upas with you, Mr. Barnabas. It has been taught to be furious at certain sounds. Let her master but make those sounds in her hearing, and she will lash the ground with her tail, and, shuddering, go into a rage. It may be fear that seizes her; it may be natural ferocity, stirred by signals she has been trained to understand. It is not craft that makes her fawn on you and seek caresses; it is the tenderness of her disposition, humanized by companionship with man. Like the dog, she loves notice; like the dog, she courts a friendly gleam of the eye; like the dog, she derives her happiness from the kindness of her master."

Kavanagh listened to Alethe, more than half fascinated himself by her sense and modesty. If there were ever to be a moment dangerous to the love of Ida, that was the moment. He waited impatiently to lift her eyes, that he might look into them.

Did he think of the major? Was there sought in that lovely face to remind him of the major?

Other questions followed fast after these. Was she known in the household? Did she know herself? Had she grown up in the family? Had her history been a secret? Had her life been a happy one?

All these queries passed through Kavanagh's brain while he was waiting for the young girl to raise her drooping eyes from the slumbering tigers.

"Queer country," muttered Barnabas. "Nothin' straight and open. Everybody mixed up with everybody. Thug, girl, Kavanagh; girls, tiger, Kavanagh; Hydrabad, Kavanagh, girl; elephant, girl, Hutton—that's no anecdote and Kavanagh; Tilac, tiger, and girl again; and if I can read the human countenance, Kavanagh sprinkled in. All right, I s'pose, but plaguy myster'ous."

"Keep Upas, my pretty," he added, in a genial tone, "but don't, for Heaven's sake, let her get the upper hand. She'd be nigh about as hard to manage as a Sepoy if she could get the advantage. There's one as can master her, howsoever, in case she can't forget what's been dreamed into her by that generous native. Tiger-tamers in future had better keep out of my path, or they'll get a cast from Methuselah that'll pluck 'em into oblivion. You'd better lock the little door up, Lethe. She's wholesomer, I guess, under 'em."

"I'll take care of her, Mr. Barnabas."

She touched Upas lightly, pronouncing her name in a soothing tone. "Come, Upas, come!"

The tigress arose, and, yawning sleepily, followed the girl from the apartment.

Barnabas looked after her with adoring eyes.

The Dreamy-Eyed and the Burning-Eyed looked wondrously graceful as they departed.

CHAPTER XX.

"MAJOR RAINBOLD," said Barnabas, presenting himself abruptly to that gentleman, whose eyes were wistfully fixed on such portions of his grounds as could be commanded from a single window, "three of your servants will never run away."

"Have you sounded them?" asked the Major.

"Right down to the quick! There's no mischief in them three, and you needn't fear 'em. But the fourth run away; and what he'll do, I don't know."

"What do you mean, Mr. Hutton?"

"I shot one through the head, and the other two fell under the blows of Methuselah," replied Barnabas.

"Dead, eh? Well, Mr. Hutton, I shall not question your judgment. What is the prospect? I am growing unpeppably weary of this suspense. Barnabas, let us decide this at once. Why submit longer to the hypocrisy of these villains yonder? Let's go out and shoot 'em down! You are well armed, and so am I. I am tired of this childish business. It's not becoming a British officer and a brave gentleman."

Major Rainbold was undeniably too much in earnest to be trifled with.

"Major," answered Barnabas, "it isn't them six that we're afraid of; it's the dozen, or twenty, or thirty, as the case may be, that are hid in the jungle, waiting to be in at the death, to plunder, to steal, and to pillage."

"We must anticipate 'em! Sir, we must anticipate 'em! We must wait for 'em to give the signal. That's the way, Sir! Why should we wait to be massacred?"

The major sprang from his seat, really angry.

Kavanagh came in.

"If I'm to venture an opinion, major, I shouldn't disagree with ye," replied Hutton. "But there's one important thing to be considered; before twenty-four hours, there's no doubt in my mind but your bungalow will be in ashes. As you've said, we must anticipate 'em. We can't stay in a bungalow that's burnt down; therefore we must go somewhere else. Now where shall we go? Do you know of any hidden place? Is there a jungle in Ingry thick enough to hide us from the enemy till times are safer? We've all thought on't; you've thought on't, and I've thought on't, and he's thought on't; and now we've got to act on't."

"This is all true," said Kavanagh. "Secret and instant flight is the only thing that is left to us. Unless the major is well acquainted with the country, we need a trusty guide; but I doubt if such a person can be found among the servants."

"There's no servants left but women and children, and they bein' natives, have nothin' to be feared on. But there's Lethe! I shouldn't be surprised if Lethe could tell us where to go. She might guide us up the hills, leadways to where we got the cure for the poison."

Just then a shrill whistle from the elephant reached them, and Barnabas immediately rushed from the house. The major and Kavanagh followed him.

Barnabas ran around the bungalow in search of Methuselah. He found him with his trunk elevated, and evidently alarmed. The cause of his excitement was a clear, red blaze creeping up the bamboo wall toward the dry thatch on the roof. Hutton immediately scrambled to his back, how, he could not afterwards remember.

He perceived that there was no use in trying to quench the fire, which was fast enveloping that part of the building.

The native soldiers were uppermost in his mind; they were the proper objects of attention. Encouraging Methuselah, inciting him to anger by every means in his power, he sought the authors of this mischief.

A volley of musketry informed him with too much certainty where to look for the Sepoys. A bullet struck the scabbard of his sword, giving him a smart shock and a slight flesh-wound; and others appeared to strike the elephant; who, with a cry like a trumpet rushed upon the aggressors.

Methuselah, to look at, was a vast, unwieldy mass; but that mass was capable of terrific emotion, and it is emotion that imparts action, speed, quickness, intelligence, and revenge.

The natives were as much surprised at the suddenness of the onset as if they had lived in a country where elephants were rarely seen. The smoke of their muskets partly concealed his coming; nor were they aware of their danger till his sharp whistle sounded almost over their heads. Instead of running, they presented their bayonets, more mechanically than from a belief that such a demonstration would be available. In their consternation, they did not remember the wonderful pliability of the animal's trunk, and the nearly human calculation that guided it. To wind that lithe arm around the barrel of a musket, drag its owner to the ground, and trample on him, was the work of a few seconds. To repeat the operation, consumed, if possible, less time; while a third, seeing with horror the fate of his companions, and dropping his weapon to fly, was stricken upon the neck and killed.

Kavanagh, who had by this time arrived, shot a fourth with his revolver, the Major wounded a fifth, and the sixth fled uninjured.

Without exchanging a word, they mutually turned to the burning dwelling. Kavanagh could do but little towards extinguishing the flames, he therefore hurried to the servants' quarters and very soon a dozen native women came hurrying to the spot, bearing pails of water, which they dashed upon the flames, with little or no effect.

It was at this trying juncture that the faithfulness and kindness of the sex were displayed. Real terror and anxiety were depicted upon their faces. If they had had their wishes, their false and traitor lords would have been brought back to obedience. Aided by these devoted women the major and Barnabas worked a long time, but without getting the mastery over the fire, which communicating with the thatch on the roof spread rapidly. The smoke arose in dense black clouds. With feelings of sorrow, Rainbold saw that nothing could save the structure. While this conflict with the destroying element was going on, Melicent's door was burst open, she was seized by the waist, and borne from the house. She cried for help, but her cries were at first overpowered by the roaring of the fire, and finally smothered by the hand of the person who was hurrying her away. She was placed on horseback, and a man immediately mounted behind her. The latter she did not see distinctly. The dimness of the night, and the smoke driving into her face, together with her own terrors, prevented her from seeing objects clearly.

The suddenness of the proceeding, the quick realization of her misfortune, each and both served to bewilder her. For the space of five or ten minutes, she was not fully conscious of what was transpiring; yet the one great, overwhelming certainty, that she was in the power of a pitiless enemy, was ever present. Ida Macgregor awoke from a brief repose to discover her room filled with smoke, more every instant flowing in. Throwing open the door, she called loudly to Melicent and Alethe, and rushed, wildly into the open air. She was met by Kavanagh, who made the best use of his uninjured arm, by throwing it around her, and urging her toward the stables.

Alethe, who had taken the tigress to her chamber, had been more vigilant than Melicent or Ida. She soon detected the smell of fire, but she was not one to be easily frightened. From her little window she could see the flames quivering, and hissing, and mounting upward. She was assured that Barnabas would come for her, when it became necessary to fly from the burning edifice. So strong was this faith, that she sat perfectly quiet, with Upas sleeping at her feet.

The smoke became quite thick and stifling; the air grew hot and unfit for respiration. Upas moved uneasily, trembled, and moaned. The pungent air penetrated her nostrils, and irritated her lungs. Alethe was thinking seriously that she was overlooked or forgotten, when her door was pushed open and some one burst in. It was not Barnabas. She expected to see Barnabas. But what a different figure, face, and expression were represented! A man, clad in blue and white, with painted visage, and a curved dagger at his side, was before her. It was Tilac, the tiger-tamer.

He paused not, but advanced upon Alethe.

"Stop!" cried the girl, menacingly. "You are near enough for good fellowship."

"Who can be too near to thee, oh, star of the morning!" answered Tilac.

"Begone!" said Alethe, resolutely. "If you advance, it is at your own risk."

"Nay, fair Alethe," said Tilac, in a persuasive voice, "the pain is in being too far from you."

"You shall change that opinion before you leave me," replied Alethe.

"Lily of India," said Tilac, earnestly, "those who approach you can have but one mind. All the treasures of Golconda were nothing to thee, oh, glory of the world!"

"As neither the treasures of Golconda nor I are for thee, go thy way quickly, oh, Tilac!"

The tiger-tamer started with surprise.

"What did you say?" he asked. "Did you speak of one that you know?"

"I seldom speak of those I do not know. This air is getting too thick to breathe. Tiger-tamer, you had better go!" retorted Alethe, firmly.

"I will go: but you shall go with me."

Tilac darted forward to seize her. She retreated, exclaiming vehemently:

"Upas! Upas!"

She still retreated, and still repeated:

"Upas! Upas!"

The tigress sprang up at the sound of her voice; she looked at Alethe, then taking her meaning from her eyes and agitated voice, and goaded on by the smoke, Upas turned, hot and angry, on Tilac. The creature had been sleeping in a corner of the apartment, nor had she been observed by Tilac; but now that she suddenly awoke and confronted him, the effect was most extraordinary; and he staggered backward, incredulous, yet terrified.

Was this the docile, obedient animal he had parted with but a short time before? What had transformed her? Was it indeed the same submissive, sagacious creature? There could be no question about the matter. Had not Alethe called her Upas? He recognized the superb head, the resplendent eyes, the glossy skin, the graceful form, undulating and quivering with strength and fierceness.

Would she forget his ministering hand? Would she forget their friendship—the lessons he had taught her? In short, would she forget her master?

"Upas, girl!" articulated Tilac, making a singular sound.

The tigress did not heed him. The signal had lost its potency. She glanced at Alethe as if for her final wishes, then sprang at Tilac, who, with muttered execrations and a loud cry, darted from the bungalow.

Alethe followed, and found Upas in the verandah, excited and angry, and glaring toward the jungle. Tilac was not to be seen. A part of his sarong was lying under her feet.

"Lethe! Lethe!" cried Barnabas, springing to the verandah.

"Here!" said Alethe.

"The house is full of smoke," he added. "The wind has drifted it in fast. We've wasted time in tryin' to put out the fire. Where's Melicent? Ida's out yonder with the major and Kavanagh; but where in the name o' natur is t'other one?"

"Come with me, Mr. Barnabas; I'll show you the way to her chamber. I fear she is suffocated by the smoke."

The girl glided through the stifling air to Melicent's room. She found the door open, and searched in vain for her mistress, aided by Barnabas.

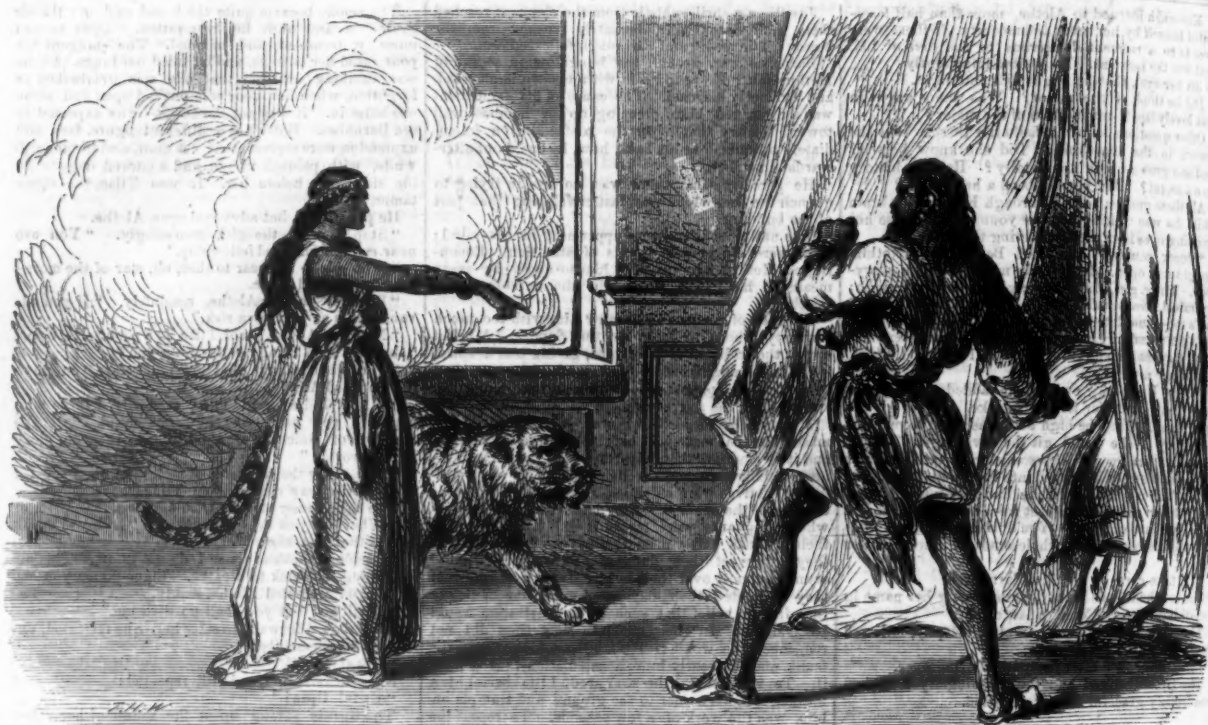
"Look no more!" cried Alethe. "Tilac has been here. My mistress has been carried away. He came for me, and had I not been defended by Upas, I should have shared, as was doubtless intended, her misfortune. Hasten, Mr. Barnabas, to overtake those who have borne her away!"

"It's an easy thing, little girl, to tell me to hurry after her, but which way am I to go?"

"I don't know. We will think of it while we prepare for flight," she replied, in a troubled tone.

"You and I, and the other one," said Barnabas, "will aid the elephant. The major and the lieutenant are going on horseback. Here they are, horses saddled and bridled. Whoo, Methuselah! Whoo!"

The concluding words were, of course, addressed to



the elephant, who was stepping about uneasily, piping and snuffing the air.

"Easy, my beauty! Don't go for to worry yourself. A pill or two in your side won't hurt ye. Don't fret, old boy—don't fret!"

"Where is Melicent?" cried Major Rainbold, anxiously. "I trusted the girl to you. Where in heaven's name have you left her? Not in the burning building, surely!"

"Some sneakin' critter has stole her away," replied Hutton.

"Stole her away?" roared the Major. "Have you allowed her to be stolen away, sir? I don't allow her to be stolen away, sir! Alethe—Ida—speak! Have you lost your tongues? Can't you say something? Am I to go distracted before your eyes?"

"That strange being called Tilac has been here," answered Alethe; "and there is no doubt but he is the cause of her disappearance. Mr. Barnabas is going after her. Mr. Barnabas always gets what he goes after."

"Confound Mr. Barnabas!" cried the choleric major, provoked at the coolness and exceeding faith of Alethe: "I want my girl, and will go for her myself. Which way did the rascal carry her? Why hadn't you told me of this half an hour ago?"

Rainbold was in a paroxysm of consternation, which prevented him from knowing exactly what he said.

"She hasn't been missin' as long as that," replied Barnabas, coolly. "We've but this minute found out about it. We're goin' to do everything that's possible. Better mount your horses right away, gentlemen. Action is a great deal better than talk. Down, Methuselah! To your knees, old boy! Let me help you up, girls. Lethe, take hold of Miss Gregor; for you're more used to elephant ridin' nor she is. That's a-gile—pretty and a-gile! Up, like birds! Now stick on tight, for the old boy rolls like a ship at sea, when he's in a hurry. If you slip off, can't stop to pick you up, you know. We shall scuttle along like a thousand kegs of gunpowder, when we get started. Where's the kitten, Lethe? What's come on it, eh?"

"Upas! Upas!" cried Alethe. "Upas! Upas!" She raised her voice each time she repeated the name. In a moment the tigress bounded to the spot, trailing after her a portion of Tilac's sarong that she had captured. The horses snorted and reared. Ida shrieked, and the major was dumb with bewilderment.

"Don't fear, Miss Ida! This is a tame and friendly creature," Alethe hastened to say. "Come up, Upas! Come up!"

The beautiful animal leaped with wonderful light-

ness to the side of its now acknowledged mistress. Ida was disposed to shrink from such companionship; but seeing Upas lick the girl's hand and press her head against her cheek, to express her confidence and affection, she regained her self-possession.

"Curious doings!" muttered the Major. "Everything changes here. Nothing remains as it was, five minutes together. The girl has got that tiger from some of her confounded native relations, I s'pose, to bite us, or scratch somebody's eyes out. Shouldn't wonder if he swapped Melicent for it!"

"No, Major, there hasn't been no trade o' that nature," interposed Barnabas. "That critter was give me by a generous native. I turned it over to Lethe to be boarded, lodged, and eddicated. She's got the upper hand on't ready, you see. Bless you, major, she'd been carried off herself, if it hadn't been for that pretty kitten! Don't they look well matched up there together, like three graces on a load o' hay!"

"The Sepoys! the Sepoys! Our poor Melicent must have fallen into the hands of those wretches! Oh, Mr. Kavanagh, what can we do?" exclaimed Ida.

The major groaned. "Yes, yes!" he murmured, huskily, "my sweet girl is lost. Oh, that I should live to know that she is subjected to the pitiless cruelties of fiends in human form!"

"This is most lamentable!" said Kavanagh. "I cannot understand how Miss Rainbold could have been abducted without our knowledge. It must have been done with extraordinary quickness and cunning. My word for it, the serpent Hydrabad has had an agency in this."

"I now remember," said Ida, "that when I came out of the house, I heard a clatter of horses' feet, just yonder, where the bridge path runs along by the native huts."

"That bridge-path, then, Miss Gregor," said Barnabas, "is what we want to find."

"Girl," said the major, arousing himself, "you said something about a visit from some one. Who was it, and what was it?"

"That unexpected visit," answered Alethe, "was from a mysterious man called Tilac, the tiger-tamer, whom it has been my misfortune to encounter before. He sprang to take me in his arms, and would have succeeded had it not been for the power I had acquired over this creature, which was at that moment sleeping at my feet. In my surprise and terror I cried 'Upas, Upas!' and he shot upon him like an arrow, forgetful of the hand that had reared her. He fled, with a cry. I followed. When I reached the veran-

dah, he had disappeared, and the animal, with the fragment of sarong under her feet, was looking intently and angrily in the direction mentioned by Miss Ida. By the help of this dumb, yet far-sighted, keen-scented creature, united with the speed and sagacity of the elephant, we shall be able to trace my dear mistress."

"There's sense for ye," said Barnabas. "She knows more than all of us, I vow. Now we're perfectly unanimous. Mount, major, mount! Can you manage to guide, lieutenant, with one arm?"

"Think not of me, my friend. I have already forgotten my wounded arm. See! it is out of the sling, and, if necessary, I can hold the rein with it while I use the other for defence. Miss Macgregor, are you safely seated? Is your strength equal to this emergency?"

Kavanagh had drawn near to Methuselah, and now looked most earnestly at Ida. His terrible anxiety and his great love were pictured on his face.

"I can bear all things with patient firmness," answered Ida, in a low and meaning voice, "if I may but rely on your promise. Remember, my friend, the barbarity of the Sepoys, and when hope is lost, I shall look to you for that to which you have pledged yourself. I will not shrink, Mr. Kavanagh. I will accept it as a full and perfect expression of your love."

"I am not certain, Ida, that it is possible, as I once said to you; but I think I may be able to keep my promise," he said, sadly.

"I will have no doubts, Mr. Kavanagh. Say, 'I will do it,' and say it firmly," said Miss Macgregor, in accents deeper and more thrilling.

"Miss Macgregor, if the moment of such dire extremity should come, you yourself shall command my arm. Look at me in the manner you told me, with your hands clasped, and it shall be as you will. The sacrifice will be forgiven by heaven!"

"Thanks, my friend! Thanks are all that Ida Macgregor can give you."

"Nay," whispered Alethe, "you have given him more."

The girl had scarcely murmured these words when a stunning report of musketry reverberated in the jungle, and a dozen bullets whistled around them.

"On!" shouted the major. "On!"

With an angry shriek, Methuselah leaped across the open area, and, with long, rolling steps, swept like a mountain along the arched and dusky path.

Major Rainbold and Kavanagh galloped furiously behind, their swift and high-mettled horses straining every muscle to keep pace with the elephant.

(To be continued.)



THE SEVENTH MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"The Warning Voice," "Man and His Idol," "Mrs. Larkell's
Boarding School," &c.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MOANING WIND.

Is it a dream? Is it a phantasm? 'Tis
Too horrible for reality, for aught else
Too palpable. Oh, would it were a dream!
The Hunchback.

The red light of the setting sun which streamed into the room where the inquest was held at Canterbury, also lit up the murky sky of London with a fierce and angry glow.

It was as if some vast conflagration was raging. The reflection penetrated to the drawing-room of the house in Eccleston Square, though only one window was left exposed. The rest were closely curtained, as, indeed, were those of every room throughout the house, which, under the shadow of the great calamity that had befallen its inmates, were a funeral aspect.

Near that single uncurtained window—full in the warm light of the glowing sky—the twin sisters, Ada and Constance Lomax, stood side by side.

Their faces were towards the window, and thus seen, they were marvellously alike. Recent suffering had robbed each of some share of its natural bloom and vivacity, but had, if possible, intensified the likeness between them. That did not lie in externals. Of course, it was aided by the accident that each of the fair beings seemed cast in the same mould, was of the same height, presented the same contour and figure, had hair and eyes of like tint, showed the same pearly texture of skin, and echoed the identical notes of the voice. Still the mystery of resemblance lay deeper: it was the result of identity of soul, similarity of character, or, perhaps, strong sympathy and inalienable affection.

The arm of each sister was round the waist of the other as they drew towards the window; but it was the head of Constance which rested on the shoulder of Ada, as it had ever been wont to do; for, little as they differed in any respect, Ada had the greater strength of character, and this gave the effect of age. The appeared naturally to take the place of an elder sister, and Constance had from childhood looked up to her and been guided by her judgment.

Absorbed in their deep sorrow, the sisters were un-

[DETERMINED CONDUCT OF CONSTANCE LOMAX]

conscious of the sunset, till Constance, raising her tear-laden eyes, appeared suddenly awed by it.

"See!" she cried out, "how beautiful! And Arthur cannot see it in his prison—the prison to which I have consigned him."

"No, darling!" exclaimed Ada, "it was not your act—not your fault. It was a sad—a piteous mischance—but you are blameless."

The sister listened, and her limbs quivered with suppressed emotion.

"My act—mine alone!" she gasped. "You do not know all. I have not confessed to you my folly, and the error into which it led me—from which these terrible consequences have sprung."

Ada regarded her with astonishment, her heart palpitating fiercely as she did so.

"You have not forgotten," said Constance, "no, whatever may happen, we shall never forget it—the time that followed Arthur's sudden and mysterious disappearance. You know how we watched day and night, striving to persuade mamma that all must be well, yet with a horrible conviction at our hearts that something dreadful had happened?"

"Oh, those days—those endless, miserable nights!" cried Ada, shuddering at the recollection of them.

"At length," resumed Constance, "one evening, in the dusk, you had a visitor."

"You knew that? You?"

The question shot from quivering lips.

"I did."

"And you knew who this was?"

"Yes."

"You saw him? Impossible! We were alone in the gathering gloom, and it was dark, quite dark, when he stole, like a thief, out of the house."

The agitated Constance threw herself at her sister's feet.

"Forgive me," she cried, with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, "pray, pray, forgive me! I did not seek to intrude on your confidence. You know I am above the meanness of wilfully playing the spy; but the hateful part was thrust on me. I did not see, but I overheard—"

"All—all that passed between us?"

"No, not all."

"You are sure of that? You are certain you did not hear—"

She stopped abruptly.

Her face was livid, and she trembled so, that it was necessary for her to press one hand against the wall, to save herself from falling.

Constance, alarmed beyond description, struggled to her feet.

"I will tell you everything, Ada," she said, "every word, every syllable, that reached my ears. Oh, why are you thus agitated? What is it that moves you thus? I will tell you faithfully, indeed—indeed, I will."

"Do so."

The words were harsh—the expression of her fair face, almost stern.

"On that day," said Constance, "after hours and hours of painful watching, I had quitted the drawing-room, overcome with the presentiment of evil which we shared, and, seeking the relief of a quiet cry to myself, I stepped into Arthur's room. I never shall forget how cold and desolate it looked in the twilight, or how everything that he had left there struck a chill into me, as if it had belonged to the dead. Overcome with my feelings, I leant my head against the wall, and wept there in the growing darkness as if my heart would break. Arthur's room, as you know, adjoins the library in which visitors are shown, and only a thin partition divides them. As I thus leant against the partition, I was suddenly astonished at hearing voices in conversation close to my ear. One voice I instantly recognized as your own, the other was not strange to me, but I could not for the moment recall to whom it belonged."

"I know, I know."

"It was—"

"What! must I hear it?" said Ada, impetuously.

"Am I never to be spared that torture? Do you, like all the world, take a delight to hiss into my ears that hideous name? It was—Immac Garmeson! There, you see I know it, and haven't spared my own lips the foul syllables. Now, go on! go on!"

Terrified at the spasmodic bitterness of these words, Constance reluctantly proceeded:

"I would at once have retreated. I ought to have done so. It was my duty. But the very first word that caught my ears rooted me to the spot. The banker spoke of Arthur—spoke of him as a criminal. Oh, those words! those words! when shall I forget them? It was our brave, noble, upright, generous, darling Arthur, and he called him—a criminal! I hadn't power to move—I did not think of it. Overwhelmed with what I had heard, I had no thought but to listen, to hear the worst. It was so wrong! I have felt it ever since. I have reproached myself bitterly for my meanness: for the want of principle and honour, that could let me play the listener; but I had no such thought then. Terror for Arthur drove everything else out of my head."

"As well it might. But you listened, you say, and you heard—?"

"The story of his crime. That his extravagances, of which we already knew, had involved him in difficulties. That he had lost money at billiards, heavy sums that he could ill meet, and yet more at cards. That, in the hope of retrieving all, he had played more rashly, and lost still more. That in a moment of temptation and to save himself from the ruin which stared him in the face, he had forged his name to a cheque for a large sum, had cashed it at Plater, Garmeson, and Co.'s, had so met the chief claims against him, and then made off, Garmeson alone knew whither."

Constance paused.

"You heard more!" cried Ada, "much more!"

"Yes."

"Tell it me."

"I heard the name which he had put upon the forged cheque."

"The name of 'Leonard Havering'?"

"Yes, the unhappy victim of—"

"Of his own vices, his own unbridled passions," cried Ada with some bitterness. "But you heard more than this?"

"No."

"You listened no further?"

"I could not. The horror of what I had heard overcame me. I grew sick at heart, giddy, and incapable of distinguishing sounds. The room swam round; conflicting voices drummed in my ears. I knew not what happened next. But when I recovered I found myself seated, and on again applying my ear to the wall, all was silent. The interview was over, the banker gone."

"Thank God!" died in silence on the sister's lips.

She had feared so much, that this revelation came upon her as a relief. Yet so great was her alarm, that it rendered her incredulous. She feared that the loving sister might desire to spare her feelings, and might shrink from appearing to have surprised her profoundest secret. Yielding to this apprehension, she turned upon her almost cruelly.

"You are sure," she demanded, "that this is true?"

"True?"

Never had suspicion or mistrust sprung up between those united hearts before, and this question, implying both, went to the heart of the gentle Constance like a knife. Already there had come upon her a vague dread that recent events had compromised her in the world's eyes—that she had sustained an irreparable loss, that of reputation. But as yet she had not felt this; and it was hard to credit that the first blow at her self-respect should come from a sister's hand.

Perhaps that sister had some inkling of this. At all events she saw at a glance the pain her question had inflicted.

"Forgive me, darling!" she exclaimed in a pleading tone, "I did not mean to doubt you. But—but I am crazed, bewildered with all this trouble. I scarce know what I think or say. I fancied you might have overheard some foolish words not worth the listening to, but which I would have spared your ears."

"Surely I heard the worst, Ada?" Constance asked.

"Yes, oh, yes! the news of Arthur's folly was the worst."

"His crime, Ada, his crime. A mere folly might have deserved blame; but this was worse, this filled me with terror. I thought of the act and its consequences, till I grew mad. I could not rest. I could only reflect on what he had done, and what it might be possible for me to do to save him. Half frenzied, I locked myself in his room, and thought and thought, till I could think no more. In the midst of this great trouble I seated myself at Arthur's desk. It was covered with loose papers, and with trifles which in his own careless way he had thrown there. Among the rest was the portrait-looket he had playfully refused to give me on the last morning we saw him."

"What! He had left it here?"

"Yes. But why do you ask so anxiously?"

"Because so much has turned on that. It has cost me so many hours of agony—so many sleepless nights! It was found in the hands of persons of suspicious and desperate character, and we believed that Arthur had fallen a victim to some act of treachery. Poor boy! I never thought I should live to wish it had been so!"

She spoke through choking tears; Constance, too, yielded to the influence of the great sorrow that had overtaken them, and for a time there was silence in the room.

It was Ada who, struggling with her emotion, took up the thread of their conversation.

"When hard pressed," she said, "the suspected man confessed that he had stolen the locket while pretending to render help to you on the night of the

fog. You had taken it with you on quitting the house?"

"I had," Constance proceeded to explain. "Finding the locket on the desk, I took it for safety, and had it at the time of the accident. But it was not of that, that I was about to speak. Among the scattered trifles near it, I found what was of infinitely greater moment, I found a confirmation of the banker's statement."

"As to the forgery?" the sister inquired, eagerly.

"Yes. There were a number of cards with different names, most of them old and soiled, but one was brighter and newer than the rest, and when my eye lighted on it, I stood transfixed. The name on it was not engraved, but was in the new mode, a fac-simile of the writer's signature. Need I say whose it was? Need I say why, after hearing what I had heard, the words 'Leonard Havering' seemed to burn into my brain?"

"And yet it might have been a mere coincidence," Ada suggested.

"It might; I have since thought it probably was. But it did not stop there. On the desk there lay a scribbling-diary open, and on the leaves were a number of drawings and half-sentences, jotted down in idle moments. None of these were of any importance, with this exception, that at the bottom of one page there were half-a-dozen imitations—close and expert imitations—of the name on that particular card. Oh, darling! I think of what I had overheard, think how serious the crime of forgery is, and then tell me if I was rash in jumping to the conclusion that these were evidences of Arthur's guilt? All that night I lay in agony, thinking what might be done to save him. Twenty wild schemes shaped themselves in my head; but one only appeared feasible. I determined to see Havering, who was as I had heard, on visiting terms at Lady Severn's, to make a confession of Arthur's guilt to him, first securing the promise of secrecy, and then to implore his pardon for the erring boy, on condition of my restoring the thousand pounds."

"Darling!" cried Ada, clasping her to her bosom in a transport of affection. "But why," she asked, "did you not take me into your confidence?"

"It was part of my plan to do so," was the answer, "and when morning came I sought you for that purpose. But you had left the house."

"I—I had left?" said Ada, echoing the question, and drawing back as if in alarm.

"I did not credit it at first, for the fog choked up the streets, and it was as dark as night; but when I thought of what you, as well as I, had heard, I did not question but that you also had taken some premiss step to save Arthur."

"Yes—yes, to save Arthur," echoed the sister, trembling.

"Convinced of that, I waited and waited until my fears would permit me to wait no longer. I pictured Arthur's arrest. I thought of his probable conviction, disgrace, and punishment, and then I resolved that I must act, come what would of it; that I must make that one effort to save him at every risk. In this mood I left the house. You know the rest. You know what befel me in the fog, and how the accident of Havering's card being found on me led to my being conveyed to his house. You know what terrible consequences have followed that one false step. Yes, Ada, dear, I did it for the best; but I was wrong. I acted in my wilful, impulsive way, when I should have been guided by your sound judgment, and then—oh, it is horrible to think of!—then all this misery might have been prevented. Havering might be alive at this moment, and Arthur—oh, no, no! I dare not think of him! I dare not—I must not!"

She clasped her hands across her brow in an agony of despairing grief.

Ada drew her close, and pressed the sunny head to her bosom.

"You reproach yourself too bitterly, darling," she said, in a low, soothing tone. "You acted for the best, and if misery has come of it, you are not to blame. Believe that heaven has for some wise but inscrutable purpose seen fit to visit us with this affliction."

"I do try to think so—to believe so," cried the distracted girl; "but oh, Ada, to think that I stand before the world branded with dishonour, and that our bright, noble, chivalric Arthur is in peril of his life—his life, Ada!—as—as a murderer!"

The reflection was too terrible to admit of any form of consolation, and the distracted sisters could only lock each other in a passionate embrace, and indulge the silent relief of tears.

And as they thus sought in mutual sympathy strength to support the burden of the sorrow that had come upon them, the fiery glow died out of the sky, the shadows of night closed in, and a shrill wind springing up, moaned and wailed around the house as if charged with some dismal warning which it strove in vain to utter.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LADY SEVERN'S TACTICS.

Ah, well-a-day! He's dead—he's dead—he's dead! We are undone, lady, we are undone.

Romeo and Juliet.

It was—as we have seen—to Lady Severn's drawing-room that intelligence of Leonard Havering's violent end first found its way. The effect was to awaken in her ladyship's mind unbounded astonishment, and not a little indignation.

Her pride—and she was intensely proud—naturally took alarm at the idea that the name of one closely related to her should have transpired in connection with such an equivocal affair.

At a glance, she saw the terrible blow which such a fact must strike at her position in society.

None of us can afford to be indifferent to the opinions of those about us, and least of all can those who move in the higher circles. Their position is based wholly on trifles. The accident of birth is one of these. Social or political influence is another. Money, or the appearance of money is, of course, indispensable. Morals do not count, though manners do; but there are certain offences against the code of society which are hard to tide over. Thus it had required all Lady Severn's tact and generalship to alone for an out-lawed brother-in-law, and a branch of the family in a position often delicately hinted at as "shady."

Hitherto she had been able to throw the shield of her own claims as a patrician over this "shady" branch with success. No one had dared to slight Lady Lomax on account of her misfortune in her sister's hearing; nor to treat either Ada or Constance as being on any other than a footing of equality.

But how would it be in future?

She asked herself that question, and felt instinctively that there was but one answer.

"However it has come about," she argued, "it is most unfortunate. It will treble the difficulties of my position. No matter for the truth, people will talk. Constance may be innocent of anything but indiscretion. She may have had a strong reason for going down to Canterbury; but that her name should be mixed up with that of a military man, in an affair of this sort, is fatal. We shall have up-turned eyes, shrugged shoulders, sneers and whispers, and meaning nods—in fact, it is a scandal, and no reputation is strong enough to stand that."

This was when her ladyship knew nothing of the real facts of the case. But the bare rumour was enough to render her excessively angry.

When a few hours brought the matter to light—when she learned, in common with the rest of the world, that not only was Constance implicated, but that Arthur had brought on his family a double disgrace, as she put it—first by enlisting as a common soldier, and then by incurring the suspicion of being guilty of an atrocious crime, the lady was well nigh driven to desperation.

Her first act was to send the carriage for Lady Lomax.

The poor mother, who dared not refuse her sister anything, arrived more dead than alive, overwhelmed with anguish and despair, yet half incredulous at the calamity which had befallen her. Lady Severn was too indignant for sympathy. Her feelings were wrought up to the highest pitch, and she thought only of giving vent to them. Regardless of everything, therefore—regardless even of common justice, she overwhelmed her hapless sister with reproaches.

In the course of a stormy interview—if that could be called an interview in which the speaking was all on one side—she reminded Lady Lomax of her boundless love and affection, and of the proofs she had afforded of it, during a long, long series of years. She bade her remember that she had befriended her and her children from the moment when they were deserted by that degraded being—Gervase Lomax—whose vices there was reason to hope had long since brought him to a premature grave. And putting this part of the case in the strongest light, the excited and indignant lady thereupon demanded whether what had now happened was the sort of return she had had a right to expect?

What could Lady Lomax reply?

Borne down by the overwhelming torrent of her sister's indignant reproaches, she could only put in a feeble protest on her own behalf, and then avail herself of woman's strongest refuge, copious and hysterical tears.

These produced a speedier effect than any eloquence of words could have done.

The indignant lady melted.

From bitter reproaches she passed to the stage of argumentative remonstrance.

"Do I complain without cause?" she put in. "After all I have done, had I not a right to expect some better return than this? What does Ada, my favourite, do? What? Why yields herself up to an infatuation for a mere Commoner's son, of no note or standing, young

Hannet Tresillian. Oh, you are surprised, of course? This is news to you? A mother's watchful eye has not discovered what is patent to the whole world. Yes, I repeat, to the whole world. What return Constance has made, I need not mention. You will defend her, of course? You will say she was not to blame, and acted with singular discretion. But even you must admit that she had compromised herself to an extent that nothing will redeem. As to Arthur—but I will spare you the pain of listening to one word against your hapless, misguided, but I hope not criminal boy. Whether he is innocent or guilty, longer heads than mine must determine. Whether he will be able to establish his innocence—supposing that he is innocent—is exceedingly doubtful. And under any circumstances, what an equivocal position he places us, I mean his family, in! The obloquy of a charge such as he has brought upon himself can never be wiped out."

At the thought of this, her ladyship's indignation began to rise again toward fever-heat; but in spite of her pride she was a true woman, with a tender, impressionable heart; moreover, she loved her sister, and could not endure to see her sitting there, not offering one word of remonstrance, but only sobbing as if her heart would break. So suddenly flinging away even the show of irritation, she caught the agonised mother to her heart, and wept over her in the fullness of her sympathising love.

After this scene, Lady Severn took a more practical view of the matter, and was guided more by sound judgment than by caprice of temper.

She decided that every nerve must be strained to save Arthur.

Her husband—Lord Severn—ventured on a faint remonstrance; but the murder had utterly crushed, enfeebled, and demoralised him.

"Hem! 'tis useless to attempt to save the lad, Margaret," my lord ventured to urge. "The evidence proves him guilty."

"Tony!"

"Well, my dear, if it doesn't quite prove that he is, it proves that he ought to be."

"You are talking nonsense, Tony," said his lady, with great severity. "Understand now. In this house, and among my friends, there must be but one opinion on this subject. Remember—and she repeated the words one by one, as if teaching a boy a lesson, "Arthur—Lomax—is innocent—and—must not—fall a victim—to—circumstantial evidence!"

"But, Margaret—" he urged.

"What?"

"The evidence is so strong—"

"That I would not hang a dog upon it."

Lord Severn was not one of those who, convinced against their will, remain of the same opinion still; and having received his lady's positive instructions as to the view of the evidence to be taken, he forthwith began to see that it was weaker than he had supposed, was altogether circumstantial, and not such as any jury could convict upon.

Moreover he gave the family solicitors instructions for them to take the necessary steps for defending Arthur Lomax, regardless of the outlay involved. The solicitors did not receive instructions in time to attend the inquest; but that was of small moment, as a corner's verdict goes for little. It is before the judges of the criminal court that the real issue of life or death is fought out.

But though thus generous toward Arthur, in whose guilt she refused to believe, Lady Severn was unjustly severe upon poor Constance.

Why is it that women are so hard upon their own sex? Why do they regard with such cruel and resentful harshness the failings of their erring sisters? Perhaps it is because they are painfully conscious that the slightest deviation from the path of rectitude is fatal to women, and it behoves each one to protest against sympathising with any departure from the high moral standard they are compelled to maintain.

In this spirit, Lady Severn thought it right to adopt an exalted line of conduct toward her erring niece.

When offered a full explanation of her conduct, she declared that "she had heard enough on that painful subject already."

When entreated by Lady Lomax to agree with her that the character of her darling child was really without taint or blemish, she retorted that "when people began to talk about a girl's reputation, she had ceased to have any reputation to talk about."

On the like principle, she had declined to see the poor girl, on the plea that she was certain she could not control her temper, she should feel so annoyed!

All this was unjust and unkind; but it did not strike her ladyship in that light.

She only looked on it with the eyes of "society," and the laws of "society," enacted for its safety, are as terrible as those of Draco, and those who move in its charmed circle are pledged to administer them with unflinching austerity.

But the effect of this injustice and unkindness on

the mind of Constance Lomax was most distressing. Sensitive to a degree, she had learned with dismay that events had brought her name before the public, in a doubtful light. In its virgin purity, her mind recoiled with affright at this discovery. She dreaded the finger of scorn. She cowered down before the bare idea of contempt, and shuddered at the suspicion of evil-doing.

So keen were those feelings, that they made her jealous of the least appearance of coolness, even on the part of those who clung to her with an idolising love. She feared lest in her heart of hearts her mother might despise her, and hung sensitively upon every word which fell from her doating sister's lips, dreading to detect in an altered tone or unguarded emphasis, proof that she too condemned her.

Imagine her feelings, then, at the conduct of Lady Severn, and how acutely she suffered under the effects of it!

This was more particularly the case when, as the sisters sat together in the dusk of the evening, as described in the last chapter, her ladyship was suddenly announced.

Before they could give expression to their surprise, the silken sweep of her long dress was heard at the door, and the next moment she had rushed into the room, with an exclamation of disgust at finding it so dark.

Then she made at once for her favourite, Ada, and embraced her, but took no heed of Constance.

"I have not a moment to spare, dear," she said, still ignoring the presence of the other sister, "but it is right you should know all that is happening in this terrible crisis. Everything that can be done for Arthur will be done; and, after all, dear, the evidence is only circumstantial."

"You believe him innocent?" said Ada.

"It is my duty to do so," was the severe reply. "Heaven only knows where the truth lies, what really happened, or who is actually the guilty party; but we are bound by every tie of relationship and affection to believe Arthur innocent. His own confession may implicate one we little suspect. But I must keep to the point, dear. In the emergency, I felt it would be satisfactory to consult an old friend, and I at once sent for our banker—Mr. Garmeson."

"For him?" exclaimed Ada, with a shudder.

"Yes; and, as I expected, he entered into my views at once. He admires Arthur, oh, so greatly!"

"Admires—him?"

"And what is more, is convinced of his innocence."

"He—said—this?"

"Oh, yes, owned it frankly. Said that, from what he knew of the dear boy, it was impossible that he could be guilty of a criminal action, however great the provocation."

And here her ladyship half-glanced at Constance, who, crouched in the gloom, listened with rigid limbs and a face of deadly pallor.

"He is an admirer of yours, too," the lady rattled on—"in a fatherly way, of course. But as I was about to say, he at once set off to Canterbury, where the inquest has been held to-day, and has just telegraphed the verdict. It is against Arthur—"

"They have found him guilty?" cried Ada.

"Guilty of—of murder?"

"Yes."

A low, wailing moan burst from the gloom in which Constance Lomax listened; then, in a voice strained and unnatural with excitement, she cried out:

"It is false! They are mistaken!—they are deceived! I know it! I will stake my life on Arthur's innocence!"

Lady Severn heard her with amazement; but before she had time to ask the meaning of these words, Constance had risen, and was tottering blindly from the room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DESPERATION.

In desperate moments we use desperate means.

Here danger threatens—shall I hold my hand?

Since I have gone so far, shall I halt now,

And sign my own conviction?

Idylls of the Night.

INSTINCTIVELY seeking the seclusion of her own chamber, Constance Lomax there yielded herself up to feelings which, in their intensity, drove her to the verge of madness.

To Ada's ears she had poured out part, but only part, of the sorrows with which her heart was charged.

She had lamented the blight upon her own fair fame, and the untoward circumstances which had driven a brother to avenge it, in blood.

But, beyond this, there opened up in her own mind a dark and lurid region of horror, on which she could not permit, even a sister to look—a prospect from which she averted her own mental gaze in dismay.

It was no mere hysterical weakness which had forced from her lips that piteous moan with which she had received the news of Arthur's fate, nor was it without cause that she had uttered the words which excited Lady Severn's amazement.

From the moment of the first shock, occasioned by the news of Haverling's murder, the sense of the reality of that secret horror, of which her breast was the depository, had been intensifying, and it needed only the news Lady Severn brought to render it overwhelming and insupportable.

The first result was a feeling of prostration, then followed feverish, unnatural promptings to action—a desperate feeling, in which every idle moment seemed a sin.

"Arthur must be saved!" she exclaimed aloud, as this phase of emotion came upon her, "and by my aid. It is I alone who have the power, and I must and will use it. What is an idle form of words against this horror? What if I had sworn as Solomon swore, by the unutterable name of God? It would still be my duty to save my brother's life. To save his, yes; but if in my efforts to do that I should involve—"

She paused and hid her face, shuddering as she did so.

The consequences of the step she proposed to herself appeared to be too monstrous to admit of expression in words.

"Oh, miserable, miserable girl!" she exclaimed, after a few moments of intense mental agony. "Why cannot I die, and so end all? Why must I live only to suffer? What is my crime, that my punishment has no limits? Merciful heaven, pity me! spare me! Let me die!"

Silence unbroken by a sigh or sob, followed this passionate outburst, in giving expression to which the fair girl had sunk crouching to the ground. For a long while she remained in that attitude, as if stricken down by the force of mental suffering. The paroxysms of feeling did, however, at last pass away, and she rose abruptly, and evidently under the effect of some hasty resolve or desperate purpose.

"I will see him, and to-night," she said; "whatever the risk, I will see him, and if his heart is human he must conform to my wishes."

Hastily as the resolve had been formed, it was as speedily carried into execution. Nervously fearful of being stopped or delayed, Constance quickly threw a dark shawl over her shoulders, and fastened it with a silver arrow, then selecting a bonnet of black velvet, and a veil of black Maltese lace, which effectually hid her face, she passed from the room, and descended the well-staircase, now dark with the shadows of night, and so let herself out of the house.

It was a gusty night, dark and chill: the square was deserted and quiet as the grave.

Constance paused for a moment as she descended the steps, and looked up at the drawing-room windows. The blinds of two were down, and they had a white, death-like aspect: the third was black, showing that no light was yet lit. Her heart smote her as she thought of Ada sitting there in the dark, brooding over the sorrow that had come upon them, but she dared not yield to the emotion of the moment.

"What shall I do?" she asked herself, hesitating. "Shall I return and tell her all? No, no! that is impossible!"

Yet she still hesitated.

And even when she had decided that her purpose was one not to be thwarted, and such as would justify whatever anxiety her absence might occasion, she moved away with slow and lingering steps, reluctant while resolved.

At the first cab-rank she hurriedly secured a vehicle, having, however, the presence of mind to select one of a dark and unobtrusive character; and having taken her seat, directed the cabman to drive eastward—to the neighbourhood of St. Asaph's Church.

By the time that destination was reached the night had grown darker, and the wind having sunk, rain was beginning to fall. In spite of this, however, Constance, on arriving near her destination, stopped the cab at a street corner, and got out; then, gathering her shawl closely about her shoulders, disappeared as quickly as possible from the cabman's observation.

The locality was evidently strange to her, and as in her anxiety to escape notice, she had turned out of the main thoroughfare, she was speedily lost in a tangled mesh of interesting and bewildering streets. Her only landmark was St. Asaph's Church. It was to that she had requested to be driven, and now she had nothing to rely on but occasional glimpses of its barbarous spire, just visible against the murky sky.

"Heaven grant he may be here to-night!" she ejaculated. "At the old place, those were his words. Yes, 'I am at the old place,' he said distinctly, and it must have meant the tavern that was his ruin—the horrible place in which he sunk reputation, fortune, friends, self-respect—everything! That it was hereabout, I well remember; but this mass of

streets bewildered me. The church-spire rose above it, straight into the sky. I recollect, and the lane was dark, narrow, and villanous. Surely this was the way to it?—this place where the houses almost touch, and that newly-built warehouse blots out both sky and sun?"

The spot at which she had arrived differed little from the rest of the neighbourhood, except that it was older, blacker, and more offensive in odour. The houses had a dilapidated aspect, and the taverns were of a lower class than that to which St. Asaph's Cross belonged, although that famous hostelry, to which the reader has already been introduced, was not fifty yards distant.

Before one of these low houses of entertainment, Constance abruptly stopped.

In doing so she involuntarily clasped her hands, and cast a piteous, reproachful glance at the ill-looking place.

"Is he here?" she gasped. "Is he here to-night?"

So far as its exterior was concerned, it did not seem a likely place to have attracted any one either on that or any other night. The upper part of the house was as black and warped as if, at some remote period, a fire had half-consumed it, though the appearance was, in fact, the result of neglect and city smoke. A lamp over the door bore some inscription—probably the name of the place—but it had not been lit that night, or the wind had blown it out. A large window of numerous panes in a heavy frame-work constituted the main feature of the frontage, and a blind, yellow, or rather orange, in colour, owing to years of tobacco smoke, hung in it, and hid all within. That blind was inscribed with the word "Beds." When we have said that the doorway under the unlit lamp was narrow, cavernous, and quite dark, it will have been gathered that the place offered few attractions to chance passengers, and did not convey a favourable impression as to the character of its habitual frequenters.

Though she had found the place of which she was in search, Constance Lomax did not attempt to enter it. Other considerations, besides an obvious loathing and detestation, probably deterred her.

She only lingered near it long enough to satisfy herself that she was not mistaken, and was in the act of withdrawing, though the rain had now begun to fall smartly, and a chill blast cut through the street, when the sound of approaching persons caused her to hesitate.

It was a merry, loud-talking party, and fearing annoyance, as a lone and unprotected woman, Constance overcame her aversion, and stepped back into the gloomy doorway of the house.

While there she overheard a brief conversation.

"No light in St. Asaph's vestry to-night, eh, Chipper?" said a thick, husky voice. "You're a sly one, you are."

"I assure you—" began the person addressed, and who was no other than the clerk of St. Asaph's.

"Assure us? Oh, yes, you've plenty of assurance," laughed the other; "but I say, what did you make by that little transaction? Overhauling the registers at midnight ought to be well paid for. I should want something handsome to go into a church at that hour."

"Or any other, I'm afraid," retorted a companion.

A loud laugh rang through the street at this sally.

"But, I say," asked the first speaker, not at all put out, "what was the name he was so anxious about? I know 'twas 'Ada.'—I caught that—but what else? Something like Lorrimer, wasn't it? Ada Lorrimer?"

"Ah, that's nigh enough," replied Chipper.

"And the fellow's name was a rum'un. Imlac—there's a name!—Imlac—"

Constance heard no more.

They had passed the doorway in which she crouched, and a gust of wind drowned their voices. But that to which she had listened had filled her with amazement. Knowing nothing of what had passed at St. Asaph's Cross a few nights before, she could not even guess at the drift of what served to amuse its frequenters on their homeward way; but she had caught a name so like that of her beloved sister that it seemed as if she must be the person indicated, and that in association with another name, so peculiar that, as far as her knowledge went, it was only borne by one man, and that a man for whom she had a strange aversion—namely, Garmeson the banker.

Here was food for wonder and surmise; but before she could bring herself to credit what she had heard, a scuffle of footsteps and confusion of voices in the house warned her to retreat from the doorway, and this she had hardly done, before a party of some half-dozen persons came staggering out.

Laughter, and excretions on the weather, and an interchange of gruff "Good nights," rang in the ears of the girl, as she stole a few paces off, and there saw the men who had come from the house separate and take different ways. Two only kept together, and moved off side by side conversing in low, earnest tones.

As they went, she followed; when they stopped, she also stopped, keeping them ever in sight, yet always careful lest she might herself be observed.

At length the men reached a paved court surrounded by houses, and there separated. One entered the court; the other turned back. It was this latter one whom Constance prepared to address. As he stood in the dark, rainy night, it was impossible to see more of him except that he had fierce black eyes, and an insolent bearing, that his face was buried in a red shawl, and the rest of his body hidden in the ample folds of a loose, heavy coat.

Without a moment's hesitation, Constance started across the road, and confronted this individual. He was startled at her coming upon him so suddenly, and half turned, as if to run. Then he looked at her, and uttered a terrific oath. Shuddering at the sound of the words, Constance threw up her veil, and so revealed her face.

"You here?" the man growled, starting as he recognized her.

"Yes," she said, "I've watched for you, because I've that to say which you must listen to."

"Must?" retorted the other. "That is a hard word, isn't it? Must? And why must I, in heaven's name?"

"Because that has happened which fills me with horror, and makes me desperate. You know what I mean. You know the peril Arthur is in. You must know that they have found a verdict of wilful murder against him."

The man recoiled a pace or two, as if from a blow—then recovering himself, he said, loudly:

"And what is this to me?"

"What?"

"Ay—what? Beyond regret that he should have been wicked enough—"

The girl put up her hand imploringly.

"He is not guilty," she said, "as you know."

"Indeed! I know, do I?" said the man, fiercely.

"I know nothing of the sort, and I'll trouble you to recal your words, and to repeat them at your peril. Have you forgotten—"

"The promise you extorted from me?" cried the desperate girl. "No; and it is because of that I am here. You must release me from it. I gave it rashly—inconsiderately—in ignorance, under compulsion—"

"But, having given it, you will keep it."

"No."

Her firm, clear, distinct, voice echoed through the quiet street.

The man looked at her fiercely, and there was a vengeful glare in his eyes.

"How!" he exclaimed. "This to my face? What am I to understand? That you threaten me? That I am in danger from you?"

"I must save Arthur," was the quiet but resolute reply.

Exasperated at the words, the man caught at her wrists, and looked her sternly in the face.

"Save him," he said, "if you must, and can. But not at risk to me. Mind that. Dare to breathe a suspicion to a living soul that will get me into trouble, and look out! You must be mad to come here and ask what you have of me! Release you? No! By heavens, I'd see you dead at my feet first!"

"You are guilty, then?" cried the girl. "My worst fears are confirmed—you are guilty!"

"No!" he thundered.

"If you were innocent, you would release me. But enough. I have come here to satisfy myself, and to assert my freedom. Whatever I have done, I have done blindly; but I will not—I dare not—be a partner in your guilt; and since you refuse to release me from my oath, there is but one course open to me. A brother's life is more than an oath—"

"Miserable woman!" cried the exasperated man. "That threat again, and you do not leave this spot alive!"

"I cannot help it."

"What! You are desperate?"

"Yes."

"You are determined—"

"To reveal all."

"To put my life in peril?"

She hesitated. Something more than woman's tenderness pleaded in her heart; but summoning up all her courage, she replied:

"I must save Arthur."

"Do it, then!" shrieked the other.

And in the moment of exasperation he raised his right arm, as if to fell the fragile girl to the earth.

In the upward sweep of his arm, she perceived with horror the flash of a deadly weapon.

(To be continued.)

AREA OF THE AMERICAN LAKES.—The late government survey of the great lakes gives the following exact measurement: Lake Superior—greatest length,

355 miles; greatest breadth, 160 miles; mean depth, 988 feet; height above the sea, 627 feet; area, 32,000 square miles. Lake Michigan—greatest length, 360 miles; greatest breadth, 108 miles; mean depth, 900 feet; height above the sea, 587 feet; area, 29,000 miles. Lake Huron—greatest length, 200 miles; greatest width, 160 miles; mean depth, 800 feet; height above the sea, 574 feet; area, 20,000 miles. Lake Erie—greatest length, 250 miles; greatest breadth, 80 miles; mean depth, 200 feet; height above the sea, 555 feet; area, 6,000 miles. Lake Ontario—length, 180 miles; mean breadth, 65 miles; mean depth, 500 feet; height above the sea, 262 feet; area, 6,000 square miles. Total length of five lakes, 1,345 miles; total area, 84,000 square miles.

THE LADY IN GREEN.

RAIN, rain—ceaseless rain. We know and acknowledge that it is very wrong to fret at the weather; but it is certainly most trying to the patience, after leaving home, with all its comforts, to seek health and pleasure at the sea-shore, not to see a gleam of sunshine for five or six, nay, seven days. And so cold! We might have supposed ourselves to be suddenly transported to the frozen regions.

After a day or two of shivering, and enveloping ourselves in shawls and mantles, some one sagely remarked that "it was no use to freeze to death because it was in the middle of the summer," which sentiment meeting with unanimous applause, a fire was immediately ordered in the boarders' parlour, where gentlemen and ladies, old and young, soon assembled, glad to leave their own chilly apartments.

Rather an unsocial company we were at first. All were strangers, and it seemed probable that all would remain so.

There we sat: some looking out at the window, ladies with their gloves on, no work, no books, no new arrivals—nothing to vary the dull monotony excepting, perhaps, the entrance of an attendant, politely announcing to the ladies and gentlemen that breakfast, dinner, or tea, whichever it chanced to be, was ready.

This, for a time, indeed, dispelled all gloom, for no one could excel our host in his ability to do the honours of his excellent and plentiful table.

He possessed the rare talent of not only making his own conversation agreeable and entertaining, but of leading others to do the same; so that the very persons who had, perhaps, passed the whole forenoon in the same room without exchanging a syllable, became, under his genial influence, as lively and sociable as school acquaintances, when they met after a lapse of many years. But on returning to the parlour, the spirit of silence seemed to return also, and all were as mute as ever.

What could be the reason?

I took the subject into serious consideration, and finally came to the conclusion that, as "idleness is the mother of all mischief," it must necessarily be the cause of all this; and hastily leaving the room, I soon returned with my work-basket.

Several ladies followed my example, and in the course of half an hour the gloves were all laid aside, and the fair hands busily employed in various branches of needle-work, and cheerful conversation had taken the place of the former dull silence.

The effects of industry are, indeed, wonderful. The rain was almost forgotten, so intent were we in watching the progress of collars, ruffles, purses, watch-guards, &c.

One of the gentlemen kindly produced a book on a subject of general interest, and proposed reading aloud, which offer was gladly accepted; and the time passed so rapidly that the summons to tea was unexpected and surprising to all.

About the middle of the forenoon of the fourth day we were agreeably surprised to hear the sound of a carriage driving up to the door. There had been no arrivals for several days, and some of the most curious amongst us stationed ourselves at the windows to inspect the travellers. The rain poured so fast, however, that we were unable to gratify our curiosity to any great extent.

We ascertained that the carriage contained at least one lady, and while we expressed our sympathy for her supposed wet and forlorn condition, we congratulated ourselves on our comfortable room and blazing fire, and felt very hospitably inclined towards the expected guest.

Footsteps were heard upon the stairs; the door was thrown open, and a lady entered. By entering, I mean that she crossed the threshold, but no further. There she stood, a perfect Amazon in size and mien.

Her shawl had fallen from her shoulders, and revealed her ample form, clothed in a bright green figured satin, with a pink ribbon around her waist, and another around her neck; while brooch, earrings, and numberless rings, of unrivalled lustre, were

was arranged as to be fully visible to the admiring beholder, even when the fair owner was arrayed in walking costume.

There she stood—and casting a contemptuous glance around the comfortable but somewhat plainly-furnished apartment, turned, with an air of decision, to an inoffensive looking gentleman who stood awaiting her orders in a deferential and exceedingly unhusbandlike manner, and said, haughtily:

"This will not answer at all. We must seek for other accommodation. Of course we cannot expect to find anything equal to the style of living to which we are accustomed; but, surely, something superior to this may be found."

"But, my dear," the husband ventured to urge, "the storm is so violent, I fear you will expose your health. Would it not be better to try to be contented here for one night, at least?" And the poor man cast a wistful glance at our warm fire.

"Contented here!" was the scornful reply. "How can you propose such an absurdity? Better to ride all night in the rain!"

And with one more look of contempt, our stately visitor swept from our sight, and in a few moments we heard their carriage drive from the door.

After a merry laugh at the "great expectations" of this unknown princess, and cordial wishes that success might attend her praiseworthy efforts to keep up her accustomed style, we resumed the employments which this little incident had interrupted, and thought no more of the affair until summoned to the tea table; where, to our great surprise, we found our friend in green, and her worthy spouse, already seated, and doing justice to the good fare before them.

We soon gathered from their conversation that no other accommodation could be procured, and they were reduced to the sad alternative of returning to this despicable place, or passing the night in the carriage. To do the lady justice, she seemed to make the best of her unpleasant situation—she plentifully—chatted sociably with those around her, and on our return to the parlour, exerted herself to amuse the company by glowing descriptions of her house, furniture, children, &c.

First, the lowliness of the room excited her indignation. She was accustomed to lofty ceilings. It was really difficult to breathe freely here. Then the carpet—how inferior! Absolutely rough to the feet. The chairs were certainly unfit to sit in, and she condescendingly occupied the whole of the sofa, somewhat to the annoyance of an elderly lady and gentleman, who were accustomed to enjoy a little quiet conversation in that part of the room, undisturbed by the younger portion of the company.

It was in vain to try to form an accurate idea of the mansion she endeavoured to portray; her answers to our various inquiries only exciting our curiosity more and more.

All were now listening intently to the description of the charms and various accomplishments of the lovely Angelina, the eldest daughter of our entertaining guest—

A form and face so rare,
Sure never had been seen.

Unequalled beauty, amiable disposition, wonderful acquirements. Gentlemen sighed, and ladies envied, and thus the evening passed away; and we sought our own rooms, where visions of ladies in green, magnificent castles, lovely maidens, etc., etc., formed the subject of our night imaginings.

Breakfast time came, and again our new friend appeared—still in the same green dress, pink ribbons, ear-rings, brooch, and rings—a singular morning dress, but decidedly uncommon; differing from the vulgar mass; and this was evidently the aim.

The husband sat opposite to her, perfectly quiet and harmless, as usual; attentive to her slightest wishes, but seldom venturing to obtrude a remark.

Knives and forks had just commenced their office, when a slight bustle at the door attracted our attention, and, to our unspeakable astonishment, another lady in green, with pink ribbons, ear-rings, brooch, and rings of equal splendour—in every respect the exact resemblance of her illustrious prototype, glided into the room, and took a seat at the table, followed by a pleasant-looking, farmer-like man.

We had just said she was an exact resemblance of the other, but we mean so far as regards her dress; for in face and form she was widely different, being far below the common height of women, with a good-humoured, cheerful expression of countenance, forming a striking contrast to the haughty and somewhat vinegar-like aspect of her prototype, to whom she nodded familiarly, and exclaimed, in an audible whisper:

"You are surprised to see me here, Mrs. Jones, but I gave my good man no peace until he promised to follow you. I want to see a bit of the world myself. We were very lucky to find you here, for we left home a week after you did. All your folks are well. Ange-

lina bid me say that the lads are doing well, and the cows, pigs, and all the live stock are fat and hearty. I left her up to her eyes in work, churning and getting dinner for the carpenters, who are putting up the addition to your house, which I declare you need bad enough, neighbour. I have often wondered what you could do with such a great family in your snug little nest."

If looks could silence a woman's tongue, surely it would now have been silenced, for the deadly glances which the Amazon in green directed towards her little miniature, were really appalling; but, unabashed, she continued:

"Don't be annoyed at my dress. I coaxed husband to sell the old cow and buy me one off the same piece as yours, and I bought my ribbons and all the gew-gaws of the same pedlar that you got yours of. He is a real sharper. Angelina says he charged me two shillings more than he did you."

This was too much. The exasperated lady made a hasty exit, followed by her devoted husband, and we saw them no more.

The storm at length ceased, and bright days succeeded, when we fully realized our expected enjoyment of the lovely scenery and the salubrious air around us; and after a week or two of varied pleasures, we sought our own homes, carrying with us the remembrance of the lady in green as a warning to those who aspire to a condition of life above that in which they are placed by an over-ruling Providence, and in which they are best fitted to be useful to themselves and others.

S. P. D.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER CXVI.

SURPRISES.

He who hath never warred with misery,
Nor ever tugged with trouble and distress,
Hath had no time nor any chance to try
The strength and forces of his worthiness:
Those parts of character which felicity
Keeps close concealed, affliction must express,
And only men in their extremity
Prove what they are—what their ability.

Daniel.

WHEN Amy returned she found Owen at the shop-desk, and Lily May upon the counter.

Amy greeted her little son as though she had been absent a week.

"And what luck have you had since I have been gone, my dear?" she inquired, after she had kissed him.

"Only one customer, mother dear. But such a one! and so fond of Lily May! See what a present she gave her!" said Owen, taking the bright gold piece from the baby's hands, and showing it to his mother.

"A present, Owen? For her?" This said Amy, taking the coin in her hand, and looking at it. "Yes, mother dear; but Lily May will divide it with her little sister. Won't you, Lily May?" inquired Owen, speaking as the child's guardian and trustee.

"But who gave her this?" inquired Amy. "The strange lady, mother dear. Such a lovely lady! And, oh, she made so much of her! And kissed her so! You never saw anything like it!"

"A strange lady—a lovely lady making much of Lily May! Owen, come into the back parlour. I must hear something more about this," said Amy, thoughtfully.

Owen took his pet from the counter, and followed his mother.

"Nancy, give me Lily Gay, and take my bonnet and mantle up-stairs, and put them away," said Amy, as she sat down in her low chair, and began to take off her wrappings.

Nancy obeyed the orders, and, as soon as she was gone from the room, Amy turned to her son, who had seated himself on a stool with Lily May on his knees, and said:

"Now, Owen, tell me all about this lady's visit."

Owen told all he knew from the moment of his first catching sight of the strange lady and gentleman to the moment of their departure from the shop.

"Owen—I half suspect that lady and gentleman were the parents of Lily May," said Amy, hesitatingly.

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed the boy, turning white and red, and pressing his pet closer to his bosom.

"I do, Owen. Did they ask many questions about the child?"

"No, mother dear. Only one, I think. What her name was."

"Owen, tell me how they looked, and what they said, and what they did."

"I did, mother dear."

"But tell me all."

"I did tell you, mother."

"Tell me again, Owen."

Owen went over the whole story once more.

"I don't know," mused Amy. "If they were the parents of the child, she, at least, must have known her own baby; and if she did, there could have been no reason in the world why she should not have claimed it on the spot. It is very strange. But perhaps it was just as she said—that she had lost a child, who, if it had lived, would have been of this one's age, and hence her interest in this one. Did you tell them she was not your own little sister?"

"Oh, no, mother dear! I couldn't bear to disown poor Lily May in that way. And they never asked me any questions about her except her name."

"Well, I don't know what to make of it. But I will go to the hotel and find out who they are. And that may throw some light on the subject. Owen, run up-stairs and bring down my bonnet and mantle again."

Owen put his pet in the cradle, and went to do as he was bid. He returned, bringing the required articles, and followed by Nancy, scolding:

"Now, mistress, you're not going out again to-day?"

"Yes, Nancy; I must go, on business."

"Once is enough. Once would do you good, twice is too much; twice would do you harm. Take my advice: stay where you are; let Owen go."

"No, Nancy. On this occasion I must go myself. The distance is not far, and I shall be back within the hour. Have supper ready against I come, Nancy," said Amy, as she hastily gave her babe into the woman's arms, and began to put on her bonnet and shawl.

Amy was soon ready and out of the house, and walking as rapidly as her failing breath would permit towards the Elm Tree Inn.

The sun was setting as she passed into the private entrance and asked for the landlady.

She was shown into the parlour, where she was immediately joined by Mrs. Potts, the hostess—a short, round-bodied, rosy little woman, who rolled into the room, holding out both hands, smiling, and exclaiming:

"Well, now, Mrs. Wynne, my dear, this is a surprise and a pleasure, and I am so glad to see you. And how do you find yourself, and how did you leave the little folks at home? And, Sam, do you go and make a port-wine negus, and bring it here, with some biscuits directly, and let them be good. And I hope, now that you have broken the ice, you will come often, my dear Mrs. Wynne."

All this was spoken breathlessly, without pause, as she advanced, and caught Amy's hands and shook them cordially.

"I thank you very much, Mrs. Potts," said Amy, earnestly. "I came to inquire about some guests of yours who were at our place to-day."

"Oh, yes! a young lady and gentleman."

"Yes."

"They were a Mr. and Mrs. Powers."

Almost all strangers who heard the name Powis for the first time mistook it for Powers.

"I suppose so; I suppose we are speaking of the same persons," said Amy.

"Oh, yes. There were no other guests here but them. They were a young couple, just married. I think, going on their bridal tour, I believe," said the landlady, without pause, as usual.

"Young couple, recently married, and on their bridal tour?"

"I believe so."

"And where did they come from? and where were they going?"

"I don't know no more than the dead."

"Perhaps your husband or some of your people may know."

"I don't think they do, but I will ask," said the landlady, rising, and leaving the room.

After an absence of ten minutes she returned, followed by the waiter, Sam, with a tray of refreshments.

"They came last night; they went away this morning, and their name is Powers, and that is all anyone here knows about them. And now, will you take some wine-negus and biscuits after your walk, my dear Mrs. Wynne? They will do you good," said the landlady, in the same breathless strain.

Always hungry and always thirsty, poor Amy very gladly availed herself of this invitation, and ate and drank, and was refreshed and comforted.

And as it was growing dark, Amy thanked her kind hostess, and arose to take her leave.

"Come again, my dear Mrs. Wynne, and come often; drop in whenever you are going by and rest yourself and get a little refreshment, for we shall be very glad to see you, because you haven't got no sincerer well-wisher than I am. I know what it

is to be a lone widow myself. I am not forty years old yet, and I have been a widow twice, and may be a widow twice more, for aught I know; for we are born but not buried, and nobody knows what a day may bring forth."

So twaddling on, the good little woman rolled out alongside of Amy until they reached the private entrance, at which Sam, the waiter, stood with old-fashioned gig and horse drawn up before the door.

"I knew it was too late and too long a walk for you to go on foot, my dear; so I told Sam to put Chally to the shay and take you home, and you needn't say a word, because it's no inconvenience at all," said Mrs. Potts, as Amy attempted to thank her.

"Stop at Mr. Lacy's, if you please," said Amy to the driver, who, accordingly, drove straight to Lacy's and stopped.

Amy got out and went in.

The shop was lighted up for the evening, but there were no customers in. The proprietor stood alone behind the counter.

People like those upon whom they have heaped benefits. Good-hearted Lacy liked poor Amy now more than he ever had before. And he bent across the counter gladly and kindly to greet her.

"I came, Mr. Lacy," she said, "to inquire if you know who those strangers are whom you sent over to our shop this afternoon."

"No, indeed; I do not know even their names. They were strangers in the town; stopping, I believe, at the Elm Tree Inn."

"Yes, I know that much. And—you can tell me no more?"

"Nothing more whatever. But—excuse me for asking the question; I do it, not from idle curiosity, but from real interest—why do you wish to know anything about them?"

"Ah!" said Amy, smiling deprecatingly. "It might only have been a woman's fancy; but I hoped that they were something to the poor babe that was left so strangely on my hands."

"But—pardon me again!—why should you have hoped so?"

"They called while I was absent, and no one but Owen and that child were left at home. And the lady made much of her and gave her a gold piece. Now, ladies don't drop golden coins into the laps of strange infants."

"I don't know. That depends. Please tell me all about it."

Amy gave a brief sketch of the lady's and gentleman's visit to the shop.

"Oh, I dare say it is all right. And there was nothing more in the affair than appears. The visit was purely accidental on their part, madam. They came here to purchase articles that I do not keep for sale; and I sent them to your shop where they might be bought. The rest grew out of the child's beauty and the lady's benevolence. You may depend that was all. If I were you, I would think no more of it, Mrs. Wynne. It will only worry you."

Amy thanked him and bade him good night and left the shop. At the door she dismissed the gig, and then she walked across the street to her own little home.

As she entered the little shop she glanced over the show cases on the counter. They were half empty. The stock was getting very low. The credit customers had not paid up. The fund accumulating to settle Mr. Lacy's account was very small. How was the stock to be renewed? How was Mr. Lacy to be paid? And, oh, above all, how was rent day to be met? With a deep sigh Amy passed through the shop and entered the parlour.

The table was set. And the supper was ready to be placed upon it. The two little sisters were asleep in the cradle; and Nancy was nodding over the stove. Owen was nowhere to be seen.

"Where is Owen?"

"Oh! he? He soon grew so fidgetty that nobody couldn't do nothing with him; all on your account. At last he slipped his hat on his head and rushed out to look after you. And, bless my patience! here he comes now back again."

At this moment Owen entered, breathless.

"My dear boy, where have you been?"

"I went to meet you, mother, to walk home with you. But when I got to the Elm Tree they told me you had come home in the gig."

"My poor little protector!" said Amy, smiling tenderly on her boy.

After the frugal supper was over, and the humble service was cleared away, Amy, with her needle-work, drew up to one side of the table, and Owen, with his books and slates, to the other.

"Before you settle to your studies, Owen, I want you to tell me how much that case of fancy goods cost at the wholesale price."

"Twenty-five pounds, mother dear!"

"How much money have we got saved up towards paying him, Owen?"

"Eighteen pounds cash, mother dear, and eight on

our books. If the people would pay us, we could pay Mr. Lacy all we owe him."

"Ah, yes, if the people would pay us, Owen; but they won't!"

"Then let us stop crediting them, mother dear; and sell what little stock we have left for cash only, and then we might still make enough to pay Mr. Lacy."

"Ah, Owen, but I told you before we cannot do that. While we have to ask credit we cannot refuse it."

"Oh, mother, mother dear, it is so different, if you would but only see it so. We go in debt a little to rich tradesmen for things that we can't do without, and we mean to pay sooner or later, and just as soon as we can. But those people who are on our books, mother, they go in debt to us, for things that they don't need and never mean to pay for. Oh, mother, please let me have a cash business for the future."

"I can not, Owen. I cannot refuse credit to one person while I have to ask it of another," sighed Amy. And Owen was obliged to submit.

Amy had noticed how low the stock was as she passed through the shop that evening. It was in fact so low that another ten days saw the end of it. The last few articles were sold out on a certain busy Saturday when the place was full of country people who had come to do their shopping. And the very last article, a pretty dressing-case had been sold to a credit customer.

At sunset Owen closed the shop door and went into the little back parlour where his mother sat bending over her needle-work, sewing fast, to finish a job that night.

"We may put up the shutters now, mother dear, the stock is all sold out," said Owen half sadly, half smilingly.

Amy looked up amazedly from her work.

"Is it all gone, Owen?"

"All gone, mother dear."

"Have you taken much money to day, Owen?"

"Pretty well."

"Now bring your books here, and let us see how we stand."

Owen went and brought in his books and laid them open on the table before his mother. Passing his finger down the columns he said with a droll smile:

"Mother dear, we have come out even, you and I, without any profit and without any loss except loss of time and labour. This is how we stand: We have £25. So you see, dear mother that our credit customers have got all the profit of our business."

"It cannot be helped, Owen; perhaps they may pay us some time, little by little. Now take that £25, and go over and pay Mr. Lacy."

Owen went up stairs to his mother's bureau drawer, where the money was kept, and brought it down and took it over to Mr. Lacy.

The shop was full of Saturday evening customers, and Mr. Lacy was very busy; but as soon as he had a moment's leisure, he turned to Owen and said:

"Well, my lad, what is it?"

"If you please, sir," said Owen, in a low voice, as he handed over the money, "here is twenty-five pounds we owe you for the fancy goods."

"Ha! why, have you done so well as to be able to pay already? I did not expect this for a month or two to come," said Mr. Lacy, as he rapidly counted over the money.

"It is right, I hope, sir?"

"Quite right, my boy. Wait until I give you a receipt," said Mr. Lacy, as he took a pen. And he rapidly wrote out an acknowledgment of the money, and handed it to Owen, who received it with a bow and left the shop.

"Yes," said Owen, as he crossed the street, "poor mother's credit customers have run off with all her profits. But now that I have nothing to do, I will try to hunt them up a little!"

He entered his home with a smile.

"Well, mother dear, here is the receipt. Mr. Lacy was so pleased."

Amy looked up from her work.

"I am glad—oh! I am so glad—to have paid him, Owen! Now he knows that his confidence was not misplaced. He knows that we are honest," she said.

Nancy had the supper ready—if the monotonous, wearying tea could be called a supper. But neither mother nor son complained of their fare. On the contrary, both were grateful for it, and Amy asked a blessing on it. Owen ate his toast with a good appetite. And poor Amy drank cup after cup of tea with feverish avidity.

And when supper was over, she told Nancy to set the teapot on the stove, as she should want to drink it all through the evening to support her strength, as she had to sit up and sew until twelve o'clock.

Owen heard that with dismay. He implored his mother to leave off and go to bed; but in vain. Amy told him that she had promised to finish that

dress that night, so that the owner could send for it and get it early the next morning to wear to church.

Then Owen begged to be permitted to sit up with his mother and read to her. But again he pleaded in vain. Amy would not allow him to tax his strength. She laid her commands on him to go to bed and go to sleep.

Ah! she might send her boy off to bed; but to sleep was not so easy a matter.

Owen lay awake, watching until midnight, when his mother at last came up to her room.

CHAPTER CXVII

THE OLD LODGE.

Is this the hall? The nettle buildeth bowers.

Where spotted toad and beetle black are seen.

Are these the chambers? Fed by darkest shadows,

The trailing worm hath o'er them crawling been.

Is this the home? The owl's dreary cry

Unto that asking makes a dread reply.

None!

The following Monday was a sad day for the widow's little household. The shop had been closed, closed permanently, and Owen's business was gone. Now was that all; for this was the dreaded rent-day. And Amy, with her greatest industry and closest economy, had been able to make and to save but £2 towards paying the debt. She arose that morning, full of fear, and so nervous that she could scarcely partake of the tea and bread that had been got ready for her.

As this was the regular day for going to Mr. Spicer's grocery shop to get the week's provisions, immediately after breakfast Owen put on his little cloak and hat, and took the basket and the order that his mother had written, and set out to bring them.

Amy took her sewing, and sat down in her low chair beside the children's cradle, and tried to settle herself to work. But every noise startled her. Every ring at the door-bell made her heart beat.

Amy grew more and more nervous as the morning advanced.

Owen came back from the grocer's with his basket, thanks to Mr. Spicer's goodness, full as ever.

Amy arose with a smile and a sigh, half pleased to have the provisions, half remorseful to have sent for them.

"I feel as if I had stolen them, Owen," she said, as she put them away in the cupboard.

"Oh, mother dear, if you only would believe how willing Mr. Spicer is to trust us, and what heavy weight and heaping measure he gives us. He don't feel as if we were stealing the things, mother," replied the boy, as he warmed his hands at the stove.

The day passed, but no landlord came.

At dusk, Nancy lighted the candle and put the frugal supper on the table. And Amy sat down with the feeling of a condemned criminal who had been reprieved from death for one day longer.

When supper was over and the service cleared away, and the candle snuffed and placed upon the table, Amy drew up on one side with his needle-work, and Owen on the other with his books and slates.

But on this evening Owen could not confine his mind to study. Something in his mother's was face awakened his anxiety. Presently he pushed his books from him and went into the kitchen, where Nancy was busy washing up.

"I say, Nancy," he whispered, "what is the matter with my mother? Is she ill?"

"Ill?—no. What makes you think so?"

"Oh, Nancy! she is so thin! I was looking at her to-night, as she sat there sewing. I am sure she gets thinner every day. Oh, Nancy! don't deceive me! tell me the truth! Is there anything much the matter with my dear mother?" he asked, in a pleading voice.

"La! what have I told you, boy? Think I am going to tell you false? No, there ain't nothing much the matter with your mother."

"But, oh, Nancy, she coughs so much in the night! And she moans so in her sleep. I creep to her door sometimes and listen."

"Well then you'd better be laying in your bed and thinking of your own rest, than prowling about all hours of the night after your mother. There ain't nothing much the matter with her," said Nancy, who knew better, but who took this means of quieting what she considered useless anxiety on the part of the boy.

Owen looked at her wistfully, and did not seem half satisfied.

"Your mother ought to stop sewing and nursing those babies. And she ought to go out more, and eat more meat," said Nancy.

"Oh! if she could! if she only could!" sighed the boy.

But just then the shop bell rang sharply.

Owen sprang up and ran to answer it. As he passed through the back parlour on his way to the shop he glanced uneasily at his mother.

The work had dropped from her hands and she was

looking up breathlessly, with her face blanched as white as death.

"See who it is," she gasped.

Owen hurried to open the door.

And Amy's strained ears caught the words:

"Is your mother in?"

It was the voice of her landlord that spoke. And Amy's heart almost died within her.

"Yes, sir; mother is in. Will you walk into the parlour?" said Owen, ushering the landlord in.

A burly man of the "bluff King Hal" order—big, fat, fair, with a broad face, a double chin, and—an eye to the main chance.

Amy could not rise to receive him. Fear had deprived her of muscular power. At first she could not even speak. She could only motion her visitor to seat himself in the chair that Owen placed for his accommodation.

Mr. Miller sat down, wiped his big face with a bright red handkerchief, and opened his business—opened it rather brusquely.

"I called about the rent, Mrs. Wynne."

"Yes, sir," faltered Amy.

"You know that it is due to-day?"

"Yes, sir."

The landlord took the bill from his pocket and laid it before her.

She mechanically raised it and looked. It was receipted in full.

"I am very sorry—" she began, but her voice died away in silence, and she dropped her head and covered her face with her hand.

The landlord watched her and waited for her to speak. But apparently she would not do so. And Owen came forward. Modestly but distinctly he spoke:

"Mr. Miller, mother has paid you two quarters' rent, and she doesn't owe you but one now. And she has got nearly half the money to pay that. So if you will please to take what she has got, which is two pounds ten shillings, and give us a little time to pay the balance, we will certainly pay it."

Mr. Miller looked at the manly little fellow, half in surprise and half in approbation, and then turned to his mother and asked:

"Madam, is this so?"

"Yes," said Amy, lifting her head and feeling encouraged by the support of her little son. "It is just as he has stated it. And if you will be so good as to take the sum that I have in hand and wait for the rest—"

"But what are your prospects for paying the rest, Mrs. Wynne?" interrupted the landlord.

Amy was silenced and abashed. What, indeed, would she answer? What prospects had she of paying the balance?

Again Owen came to her relief.

"Mr. Miller, mother takes in sewing, and she saves all she makes by her needle to pay her rent. And I shall get work soon, I know I shall, because I am trying everywhere; and Mr. Lacy is trying for me. And all I make I will save up to pay the rent."

"But, my little man, you have other creditors besides me," said Mr. Miller.

"Yes, sir, we have other creditors, but they know mother's case, and they do not press her," said Owen.

"Oh, no, they do not press me, they are very, very kind to me. They will wait, so that you can have all the money we make until you are paid," added Amy.

Neither the mother nor the son intended any reticence in what they said. They knew that the claims of the landlord were just, and they fully acknowledged those claims. And yet Mr. Miller felt as though he had been upbraided, and so he hastened to defend himself.

"And neither do I wish to press you, Mrs. Wynne. But put yourself in my place for a moment, if you please, and consider my case. I paid a round sum for this house to begin with, and for the present quarter you offer me but £2 10s. That is all very discouraging to a landlord, Mrs. Wynne."

"I am very sorry, sir," commenced Amy, but between mortification and anxiety, her voice broke down.

"It is very discouraging to mother, Mr. Miller. You must see that it is. We are going to do the best we can for you, sir. We can do no more," said Owen, gravely.

Again Mr. Miller turned and smiled on the young champion, and then again addressed himself to Amy.

"I am not here to complain of you, and far less to press you, but simply to compromise with you, Mrs. Wynne."

"To compromise?" slowly repeated Amy.

"Yes, madam. I confess that when I came here this evening I had little expectation of receiving the full amount of the quarter's rent, or even the half of that amount. And when I spoke to you of a landlord's liabilities and rights, I did it, not to press you, but to pave the way for the compromise I am about to propose."

"What is that, sir?" faltered Amy.

"Why, it is this: You took this house by the year. You have occupied it but three-quarters. Your year will be up the 25th of next June; nor could I, whether you paid your rent or not, get you out of the house, against your will, before the expiration of that time. Now, the compromise I have come to offer you is this—that I will take whatever you may be able to give me for this quarter's rent, and in return give you a receipt in full of all demands, on condition that you will vacate the premises at once. Now, come! what do you say to this plan?"

Amy said nothing as yet. She was asking herself the question—Where could she go?

Again Owen became her spokesman.

"Why do you wish mother to leave so suddenly before her time is out? And in the winter, too, Mr. Miller?" he asked.

"Because, my boy, I have had a splendid offer for this house and shop, if I can give possession by the first of March. There is a young doctor who has heard of the opening here, and wishes to come and settle among us. And heaven knows we want him badly enough. He wishes to take the house occupied by the late Doctor Wynne, to whose practice he expects to succeed. So, Mrs. Wynne, if you will agree to my terms, you will greatly accommodate both me and the young doctor of whom I speak."

"I should be very glad to do so," said Amy, hesitatingly, "but, in fact, I do not know where, at this season of the year, I could possibly go. I do not suppose that there is a house, or even a room, to be let in the whole village."

"I do not suppose that there is," admitted the landlord.

"Then you see the difficulty that I am in, Mr. Miller?"

"Yes, I see it, and I have the remedy."

Amy looked up inquiringly.

"You are aware that I am a house and land agent, I presume, Mrs. Wynne?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, there has just been entrusted to my care an old manor-house of this neighbourhood, because it is but two or three miles out of the village."

"Yes, sir; but you know we could not rent a manor-house," said Amy, in surprise.

"Of course not, madam. And neither is the manor-house to be let. It is scarcely in a tenable state at present. It is in a very dilapidated condition, and if there are two or three habitable rooms in the house, they are all. I believe, though I am not certain, that it has not been inhabited for many years. The ground belonging to the manor has gradually been alienated by the former proprietors, until now there is none left except the garden and orchard that surround the house."

"Well, sir, and about the house?" said Amy, seeing that the landlord had paused.

"Yes. It is the property of a minor, Mr. James Stukely. The guardians of the young man—Browning Brothers—have written to me to look after the old place, and especially to put some trustworthy person into it, as care-taker, who will live there, rent free, on condition of protecting the property from the depredations of the poor neighbours, who, in fact, have already pulled down piecemeal nearly all the fences, and have now commenced upon the window-shutters. So, my dear Mrs. Wynne, as I received the letter from Browning Brothers in regard to putting a care-taker in the old manor house at the same time that I received another letter from young Doctor Meadows asking to rent this place if possible, I naturally thought of you. And now I renew my proposition. If you will vacate this place immediately, I will take the two pounds ten shillings for the quarter's rent, and give you a receipt in full for the whole quarter. And I will put you, rent free, as care-taker in Forest Lodge."

"It is a tempting offer," said Amy, hesitatingly; "but would it not be better to place some stout man there? Could a frail woman like myself effectually protect the property from such depredators?"

"Oh, mother, mother, dear!" interrupted Owen, eagerly, "take it! do take it! I can protect it from them—indeed I can! I will keep 'em off with father's gun. Indeed, I will, sir, if you will only trust me," he added, earnestly, turning from Amy, to whom he had first spoken, to Mr. Miller, who smiled indulgently upon his boyish presumption.

"Very likely, my lad, if your body was as stout as your soul is brave," said the landlord.

Then looking at Amy, he answered her:

"They are not desperadoes who prey upon the property, Mrs. Wynne. They are only petty thieves. They can be kept at bay by the mere fact of the house being inhabited. I think you had better close with my offer. There is plenty of firewood close at hand, and there is a great deal of fruit in the orchard in summer."

"Oh, mother, mother dear, take it—do take it!"

Indeed I will keep off the thieves with father's gun!" said Owen, eagerly.

"I will take it, my boy. I will take it, Mr. Miller. My only reason for hesitating, indeed, was the doubt whether I really could take care of the property. I thank you very much for thinking of me, Mr. Miller," said Amy, gratefully.

"And now, how soon could you be ready to move?"

"As soon as you please, sir."

"Could you be out of this house by the last of this week?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Then I will give you until Saturday. By Saturday evening I hope you will be settled in your new home; so that on Monday next I can begin to prepare this for the new tenant," said Mr. Miller, rising to go.

"Oh, mother, mother dear! Oh, Mr. Miller, please stop a minute!" exclaimed Owen, eagerly, first to the mother then to the landlord.

"What is it, Owen?" inquired Amy.

"What is it, my little man?" smiled Mr. Miller.

"Oh, mother dear, perhaps Mr. Miller will write to that young doctor, and ask him to buy our stock of drugs and instruments and things," said the boy.

"Why, certainly! I suppose he would be very glad to buy the stock and fixtures," said Mr. Miller.

"To think I never thought of that! But Owen thinks of everything," said Amy.

"I will write to Dr. Meadows to-night, and, in the meantime, you may leave the shop in its present condition until we hear from him. Very likely he will take it off your hands just as it is. But you can pack up your household furniture and personal effects. I will send a cart to take them to Forest Lodge on any day that you may name, Mrs. Wynne, and the removal will cost you nothing. Good night, madam," said Mr. Miller.

Owen attended him out, and fastened the door after him.

When Owen returned to the back parlour, he found Nancy there, eager, in her affectionate interest in the family, to know the result of the landlord's visit.

Amy explained to her the whole plan of removal.

"And only think, Nancy, how jolly it will be! No rent to pay, and a great big house to roam over," said Owen.

"Damp, old, musty place, I dare say it is, leaking in every room every time it rains!" said the woman.

"Oh, but there is plenty of wood all around the house, and brushwood enough to keep a fire in every room," said Owen.

"Humph, humph! Who's going to cut it?"

"Why, I am, Nancy. And, besides, there are such lots of game—rabbits and partridges, and all!"

"It's getting out of season for rabbits and partridges now."

"But then the fruit will be coming on. Such lots of fruit!"

"Old worm-eaten stuff! I know it is."

"Oh, Nancy, Nancy, you have eat something that has disagreed with you! Why do you discourage us so?"

"Because you may not be disappointed when you get there! Don't tell me. If the old place was livable, that old screw, Ben Miller, wouldn't let you have it rent free."

"But it is not his place. He is only the agent to put somebody in it to keep the thieves from pulling down the fences until the place is let, or sold, or repaired, or something. And I am going to keep off the thieves with father's gun."

"You're going to blow yourself up, or something."

"Nancy dear," said her mistress, soothingly, "I think the plan is a good one. It will relieve me from the heavy burden of rent. And that will be such a load off my mind! And then there are other considerations that Owen has mentioned—the game in winter, the fruit in summer, and the pure country air always! But still, Nancy, if you do not wish to go with us, you need not do so."

"Who, me? Me not go along with you? You'd better believe I won't! Catch me leaving you to yourselves, to go to destruction your own way! Not if I knows it!"

"I think you will like the change, Nancy—indeed I do!" said Owen.

"Humph! well! maybe I shall like it, all the better for not expecting much of it," grunted the old woman, as she took herself off to the kitchen to finish up her work there.

"Oh, Owen, love! what a load! what a load off my mind! This rent day I have been dreading these two months past. And to think how pleasantly it has passed off! Not only am I free of the quarter's rent just due, but free from caring about rent for an indefinite time to come. Oh, Owen, love, I feel so happy to-night! And I think I shall like that old manor house so well! I dare say it is a fine, dreamy old place, with spacious rooms within and forest trees

without, and old legends and traditions hanging about it, if one did but know!" said Amy, musingly.

"Oh, yes, mother dear! what a jolly place it will be all out! Think of the birds and the rabbits! And the firewood! and the pears and apples and peaches next summer!"

"Yes, Owen. And think of our having that large house to ourselves. Plenty of space to take exercise in when the weather is bad and we cannot go out!"

"And oh, mother! if the new doctor will only buy our stock and fixtures!"

"Fixtures, Owen."

"Fixtures, then! What a lift that would give us!"

"Yes, indeed, my darling! But that would be almost too good luck to hope for. Why, Owen, if he were to buy us out, even at half price, we should be able to pay every debt we owe in the world. For listen: the stock and fixtures here cost your poor dear father a hundred and twenty pounds. And if the new doctor would give us only sixty pounds for them, that sum would entirely free us from debt, and leave us some cash in hand besides."

"Oh, mother dear, let us hope and pray that he will," said Owen, fervently.

Amy smiled at the ardour of her little son, and then she took up her needle-work, and sewed diligently to finish one of the Reverend Mr. Morley's ruffled shirts which she had on hand.

I do not know whether or not hope is a good cough medicine. But certainly Amy's cough did not trouble her much that evening.

Later, when she gathered her little household together for their evening worship, she offered up earnest thanks for what she called the great deliverance of the day.

And that night, for the first time in many weeks, Amy slept in sweet peace.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

We learn that a photographer, who has been employed by the Dutch Government to take views of the most beautiful points on the Island of Java, has discovered an entire city buried beneath the lava of a volcano close by, which has been extinct for several centuries.

THE "FRAZER" GUN.—The two 124-ton guns, made experimentally from plans submitted by Mr. R. S. Frazer, C.E., Assistant-Inspector of Machinery in Woolwich Arsenal, were proved at the Woolwich butts with perfect success. Two proof rounds were fired, under the direction of Major Freeth, Inspector of Ordnance to the Department of War. The charges used consisted of 55 lb. of powder and 220 lb. shots. The guns have been returned to the Royal gun factory, where they are to be sighted, in preparation for further trials at Shoeburyness, after which the Select Committee will enter upon a course of 1,000 rounds to test their endurance. If the result should prove favourable, as is generally anticipated, Mr. Frazer's success will be most important, as the cost, both as regards material and manufacture, is less than half that of the ordinary guns. The guns are built up, as we have already stated, of three coils only, instead of ten, as employed in the similar species of Armstrong guns. The guns have been manufactured by the ordinary process, with but half the usual time and labour.

EXTRACTS FROM HELMHOLTZ.

PROFESSOR H. L. F. HELMHOLTZ says:—In the collision and friction of bodies against each other, the mechanics of former years assumed simply that living force was lost. But I have already stated that each collision and each act of friction generates heat; and, moreover, Joule has established by experiment the important law, that for every foot-pound of force which is lost, a definite quantity of heat is always generated, and that when work is performed by the consumption of heat, for each foot-pound thus gained a definite quantity of heat disappears. The quantity of heat necessary to raise the temperature of a pound of water a degree of the centigrade thermometer, corresponds to a mechanical force by which a pound weight would be raised to the height of 1,350 feet; we name this quantity as the mechanical equivalent of heat. I may mention here that these facts conduct of necessity to the conclusion, that the heat is not, as was formerly imagined, a fine imponderable substance, but that, like light, it is a peculiar shivering motion of the ultimate particles of bodies. In collision and friction, according to this manner of viewing the subject, the motion of the mass of a body which is apparently lost is converted into a motion of the ultimate particles of the body; and conversely, when mechanical force is generated by heat, the motion of the ultimate particles is converted into a motion of the mass.

Besides the mathematical form in which the law

was first expressed by Carnot, we can give it the following more general expression:—"Only when heat passes from a warmer to a colder body, and even then only partially, can it be converted into mechanical work."

The heat of a body which we cannot cool further, cannot be changed into another form of force: into the electric or chemical force, for example. Thus, in the steam-engine, we convert a portion of the heat of the glowing coal into work, by permitting it to pass to the less warm water of the boiler. If, however, all the bodies in nature had the same temperature, it would be impossible to convert any portion of their heat into mechanical work. According to this we can divide the total force store of the universe into two parts, one of which is heat, and must continue to be such; the other, to which a portion of the heat of the warmer bodies, and the total supply of chemical, mechanical, electrical, and magnetical forces belong, is capable of the most varied changes of form, and constitutes the whole wealth of change which takes place in nature.

But the heat of the warmer bodies strides perpetually to pass to bodies less warm by radiation and conduction, and thus to establish an equilibrium of temperature. At each motion of a terrestrial body, a portion of mechanical force passes by friction or collision into heat, of which only a part can be converted back again into mechanical force. This is also generally the case in every electrical and chemical process. From this it follows that the first portion of the store of force, the unchangeable heat, is augmented by every natural process, while the second portion, mechanical, electrical, and chemical force, must be diminished; so that, if the universe be delivered over to the undisturbed action of its physical processes, all force will finally pass into the form of heat, and all heat come into a state of equilibrium. Then all possibility of a further change would be at an end, and the complete cessation of all natural processes must set in. The life of men, animals, and plants, could not, of course, continue if the sun had lost its high temperature, and with it its light—if all the components of the earth's surface had closed those combinations which their affinities demand. In short, the universe from that time forward would be condemned to a state of eternal rest.

BRASS or copper vessels boiled with a solution of stannate of potassa, mixed with turnings of tin, become, in the course of a few minutes, covered with a firmly attached layer of pure tin. A similar effect is produced by boiling the articles with tin filings and caustic alkali, or cream of tartar. In the above way, chemical vessels made of copper or brass may be easily and perfectly tinned. By a new process the articles to be tinned are first covered with dilute sulphuric acid, and when quite clean in warm water, then dipped in a solution of muriatic acid, copper, and zinc, and then plunged into a tin bath to which a small quantity of zinc has been added. When the tinning is finished, the articles are taken out and plunged into boiling water. The operation is completed by placing them in a very warm sand bath.

INTERESTING TO PHYSIOLOGISTS.

In a letter, Dr. Kidd mentions the following instance of the restoration of sight in a young woman born blind. He says: "I saw individually, and observed with interest, the following case a short time ago at the Eye Institution, Moorfields—a case that would be invaluable to Berkeley, as bearing on the part played by the senses in intellect, etc. An interesting-looking young woman, twenty-two years of age, born stone blind—partly educated in the family of a clergyman, all this time by finger alphabets, as we see blind men tracing the letters in one or two places in town—blind for twenty-two years, was restored to perfect vision in four days by a surgical operation, and to partial vision in two minutes."

"This young woman in an instant, having been twenty-two years, and from her birth, stone-blind of congenital cataract, began to see, as those deaf mutes in Paris begin to hear for the first time. The effect in the young woman was most curious, and something of this kind. She saw everything, but there was no idea whatever of perspective. She put her hand to the window to try to catch the trees on the other side of the street, then in Moorfields; she tried to touch the ceiling of a high ward: she was utterly ignorant also of common things—e.g., what such things as a bunch of keys were, or a silver watch, or a common cup and saucer; but when she shut her eyes and was allowed to touch them (the educated sense) she told them at once!"

"She could almost distinguish the greasy feel of a silver half-crown from the cold, dry, harsh feel of a copper penny. Her joy was excessive when shown some mignonette and sweet pea that one of the surgeons had accidentally in his coat, for it seemed she knew all the plants in the clergyman's garden by the touch and smell! She looked at the bunch of keys,

and with equal blankness at the flowers, then shut her eyes to recognise them. All this took up less than five minutes. But she failed to say, as well as I now remember the case, these are flowers. But on my saying when she opened her eyes again 'why, these are flowers,' 'Oh! so they are,' she replied, shutting her eyes again quickly and putting them to her nose. 'This is mignonette,' etc."

WHY FLANNELS BECOME DAMP.—An old house-keeper asks us why her flannels become damp while they are packed away in her drawers. In some cases it is doubtless owing simply to a change in the temperature of the air with which they are confined. Warm air will absorb and retain more moisture than cold air. Summer air contains a great deal more water than winter air of the same apparent dryness. If flannels are packed away in the summer, they are surrounded, and all their interstices are filled, with warm air; then if the air is cooled, it loses the power of holding the whole of the water which it contains, and a portion is deposited on the flannel. Prof. Henry found that a cubic foot of air if saturated with moisture at zero will hold half a grain of water, and at 100 degs. will hold 19½ grains.

A CLEVER TRICK.

"Sahibs," he said, "you saw me make the mango-tree grow out of the sand; in the same spot I will make this chakra," putting his hand on the head of the yellow leather-skinned boy, "disappear in the earth." We did not think it very likely that he could do this under our very noses without our detection of the trick. However, we arranged ourselves as before in the verandah, our servants and the old man's followers forming a semi-circle in front of and facing us.

In the centre of the semi-circle sat the old conjuror; in front of him, squatted the yellow-skinned boy. The conjuror now asked for a big basket, and one of our servants brought him an old hamper from the outhouse. He took it up and placed it over the boy so as to cover him altogether. At the moment of his doing this, I remember afterwards that several persons clustered up round him as if to watch closely what he did. The instant the basket was on, the old man said, "Does it press on you?" The peculiar shrill voice of the boy, which we had been hearing for the last half-hour, answering from underneath, "Yes, it presses on my head." "Well, be quick and get into the earth," said the old man, "and don't keep the sahibs waiting." In about ten seconds the voice said, "I can't get down, there is a stone in my way." "Nonsense," said the old man; "if you are not gone in two minutes, I'll flog you."

The conversation went on for some minutes, the boy whining, the old man scolding and getting angry. At last we said, "Oh, let the little brute out; you can't do the trick while we are watching, and we never thought you would." This only made the old conjuror more angry. He began to curse and swear in Mahattee frightfully, declaring he had never before failed in a trick. We laughed at him until he worked himself into a rage that was hideous to see. He tore his pugree off, threw his arms about, and all of a sudden, before we knew what he was going to do, he seized a spear from one of his followers and plunged it into the basket. A hideous scream came from underneath, and blood flew out upon the sand. Then, seizing the spear, he jabbed it repeatedly through the basket, shrieks following every stroke. Blood flowed like water. We were astounded, for we did not know whether this was a trick or not. We called on our servants to seize the old fellow, but they seemed to be frightened, and at last two of us, jumping out of the verandah, rushed towards the scene of murder. The diabolical old man was so intent on jobbing in the spear that he paid no attention to our coming. My comrade seized him by the throat. I rushed to the basket and picked it up. There was nothing under it. Only the ground was covered with blood.

Our servants crowded round, and the old conjuror, as soon as he could get his throat from my friend's grip, said, "There, sahibs! I was determined to send that fellow into the earth, and as he wouldn't go quietly, I had to force him." We looked round in amazement. "But where's the boy?" we asked. "Down there," said the old man, pointing to the ground; "but he'll be back soon." Suddenly we heard the boy's peculiar shrill voice in the distance, calling out, "Here I am, sahibs!" Everybody turned their heads in the direction, and there, running in at the gate of the compound, was the yellow-skinned boy. A present of ten rupees sent away the old conjuror and his party, delighted. How many rupees would that old man and his yellow-skinned boy tag, if they came to London and made an affidavit of communion with spirits, or that they didn't themselves know how they did what they did?—"Something Like a Conjuror."



[THE ESCAPE BY THE SUBTERRANEAN STREAM.]

THE SWORD MAKER OF TOLEDO.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I feel oppressed! The pillars of the wall
Close over me—the vaulted roof comes down,
And presses on me—air!

Goethe.

Bring a light!

Oh, who lies here?

Ibid.

"He was skillfully disguised. Why can I not recognize him? I am about his height; but how does he make his form so thick?"

A speedy examination of the count's person revealed the fact that his clothing was padded, and Juan quietly set to work to remove it from him, and exchange garments.

He was soon clad in the frilled shirt, the slashed doublet, and other dashing clothes of Monaldo, and mentally declared that that part of the disguise was complete.

"But how shall I produce that red complexion?" he thought, with dismay. "His identity seems to be concealed from his men. In that case—for he would not place himself in their power by revealing his name and rank—he must have some of that powder about him, to rub on occasionally."

He felt in the pockets, and soon discovered a small box of powder, a handful of keys, and other small articles, including a tiny hand-mirror.

With an exclamation of joy, he proceeded to rub the powder thickly on his face, yet not making it too palpable, and then he tied on the flaxen beard, moustache, and wig, and above the whole the rakish hat.

In a few minutes he was a perfect counterpart of Captain Monaldo, his disguise fitting him, and entirely concealing his own handsome face and graceful person.

"Nothing remains but to secure the count, who seems to be arousing himself," he thought. "Ah! I am now to dispose of him!"

He drew his own discarded garments hastily upon his prostrate foe, bound and secured him with strong ribbons opportunely at hand, and, to make the bonds still stronger, tore in pieces a blanket he had strapped upon his own steed for use during the nights of his journey.

At this juncture the count's eyes opened, and he regarded the figure before him with mingled astonishment and wrath.

"Keep still!" commanded our hero, quietly, cutting a peg from a tree near with his knife. "I am going

to play the part of Captain Monaldo a little while! I do not know that I shall perform it as well as Count Garcia does, but I hope to effect a little purpose of my own by it."

Before the count could speak the gag was fitted into his mouth, and he was dragged into a dense thicket bordering the road.

"I will come and free you to-night," Juan said, unheeding the menacing looks of his enemy. "I do not intend to leave you here to die, but I hope that the hours of your solitude may do you good."

He turned away, tied his own faithful steed to a tree, giving him a small range of pasture, and then he mounted Monaldo's horse, which was a fiery and fleet Arabian of peculiar beauty.

"This starlight will favour my personation of Monaldo," thought Juan, as he halted in the road and looked around him. "Oh! that I may succeed, and rescue Syria and her father!"

At that moment several of the band of robbers came galloping down the road in quest of their leader. Beholding Juan, one of them cried:

"Why, where have you been, captain? Bartolome was sure he heard you call—"

"Then why didn't he come?" interrupted our hero, imitating the shrill tones he had heard the robber-chief use. "We'll let it go this time, now that the fellow has escaped, but another time, my men, I shall expect more promptness!"

"I didn't expect to get off so well, boys," muttered Bartolome. "The captain must feel in a good humour to-night with all his booty!"

"How about the plunder, Bartolome?" ventured Juan, encouraged by his success, but uncertain to whom the name of Bartolome belonged.

The ill-looking fellow owning it replied:

"It's unusually large, captain, and carefully secreted as usual. Come and have a look at it. They kept us a good while waiting while they produced the goods; but they are valuable!"

Juan galloped back with them to the scene of plunder, with one hand on his own trusty sword, and glanced first at the weeping Jews, and then at the property of which they had been despoiled. His blood fairly boiled in his veins with indignation at the sight, but the thought of Syria recalled his coolness and self-possession.

"What is this?" he added, looking over the jewels and ornaments. "Don't you know coloured glass from diamonds? Give back the paltry stuff. We won't have the trouble of carrying it!"

The bandits always leaving such questions to Monaldo, who knew more of jewels than they, made

no remonstrance to Juan's decision, and the women were called up to identify their property, and the ornaments were immediately returned to them.

"That will take them and their families away," thought Juan. "The ornaments are valuable, and I see I have not aroused suspicions by giving them back!"

The remainder of the stolen property was packed upon horses brought by the robbers for the purpose, and then Juan gave the order to depart, and they hastened through the gorge.

To say that Juan was entirely at ease as they rode along, would be false. He did not know at what moment discovery might come. The bandits might address him some question which would have been dismissed with a single word by Monaldo, but which he would be unable to answer. Doubts assailed him as to the truth of the brigand's statement of Syria's captivity.

Added to all this, he was horrified at the discovery he had made of the identity of Monaldo.

He said little as they hastened along, but that little in the shrill tones he had heard their leader use.

When they arrived at the foot of the mountain, and his keen observation noticed the intention of the men to dismount, he was the first to spring from his horse, and then he stood moodily apart, with folded arms, watching the men as they removed the burdens from their horses, turned them loose to graze, and took the plunder upon their own backs.

"Lead on!" commanded Juan, not seeing any possibility of retreat in that barren face of rock.

The men obeyed, leading him to the opening of the cave, in the shadow of the thicket, and he passed in with the rest, saying to Bartolome, whom, he had learned, was second in command:

"I am not in the humour for saying much to-night—"

"Shall I divide the plunder, then?" interrupted the fellow, quickly.

"Yes, but see that my share is not scant, you rascal!"

Bartolome grinned, and Juan gazed about him, at the group of men playing cards and drinking, at the large, yet fairy-like cavern, with its snowy stalactites, its score of flaming torches, its glowing fire, and its well spread table, loaded with food, ready for the evening meal.

"The captain is in one of his moody fits to-night, boys," observed Bartolome, as they all gathered into the cave. "I'll divide the goods after supper. Put them down against the wall! And now for something to eat!"

One of the brigands, a mere boy in years, lifted a well-filled tray and approached Juan, saying:

"Shall I take it to your room, as usual?"

"Of course!" replied Juan.

The boy turned away, and Juan followed his lead to a room off the main cave, which was separated from it by a heavy door, where the supper was placed upon a table.

"Wine!" commanded the pretended brigand.

The boy disappeared, and Juan looked about him.

The rough wall was covered with paintings completely hiding its rocky surface; the floor was carpeted with wrought tapestry, and the furniture that crowded the room might have belonged to the Alhambra—so exquisitely carved was it.

Juan trifled with the dainties before him, but he could not eat.

His thoughts were all of Syria.

The one tumultuous feeling of his heart was that Syria was in danger, and that he was in the same cave with her, and that an accident might arise at any moment to hurl them both to ruin and death.

"Well, my boy," he said, when the lad returned with the wine, "how do our prisoners get along?"

"Which ones?" questioned the boy, with a sly smile.

"We have three, you know, captain."

"True. I mean the old Jew and his daughter!"

"Oh, we haven't heard a sound from them since you went away three days ago, captain. There they stay in their little room, feasting on each other's sufferings—for they haven't had a morsel of food since you went, as you ordered!"

Juan started. It was well for him that the light in the room was dim, and that the paint on his face concealed its pallor, and the heavy moustache and beard hid the trembling of his lips.

But they were together! That was one point of information gained.

"They must have looked pretty sharp-featured this afternoon when you went in to see them," laughed the boy. "If the walls of the cave were not so thick, their crying might disturb you—they being so near—right down the little passage here, you know!"

Another point was gained. He had the clue to their cell.

"You may go," he said, flinging a gold coin to the boy. "Make merry while you may. I am going to visit my prisoners, and am to be disturbed on no account. Is the guard at the entrance?"

"Both entrances are guarded," returned the lad, twirling the coin in his delight. "The front one, and the other at the end of this passage!" and he nodded his head to indicate the direction.

Another point gained.

Juan dismissed his young attendant, glanced at the reflection of his person in the mirror that adorned one side of the room, was satisfied that his disguise was perfect, and then soliloquized:

"Count Garcia loves Syria, and would not confide her keeping to any one but himself. These keys must belong here, and perhaps one is the key to her cell. At least, I can try it!"

He left his room, passed in the shadow of the main cave till he reached the dimly-lighted passage, and soon found a door that was locked.

His heart throbbed violently at the thought that it might be Syria's room, and he applied key after key, finally unlocking the door, which he opened, finding himself in the little cave which had been assigned to Ben Israel.

A pang of disappointment rent his heart on seeing no one there, then he came forward, lifted the dividing blanket, and beheld the father and daughter clasped in each other's arms, and both looking up to him with ghastly faces and wild eyes, that seemed like those of some terrified animal turning at bay.

CHAPTER XIX.

Must we then part, my love? Then I bid thee farewell! Farewell!

Faint.

JUAN gazed at the starving couple with a heart convulsed with emotion. He was unable to speak, almost to breathe. In the dim light of the dying lamp they looked more like two spectres than like beings of this world. He saw how weak they were; and he feared to make known his identity, lest the shock might prove too much for them.

"Their first necessity is food," he thought. "I will strengthen them before I reveal myself."

He stepped to the door, clapped his hands, and the lad who had before attended him sprang to hear his bidding.

"Bring wine and food," he commanded. "The best we have. Bring a lamp and torches."

In a brief time the inner cave was all ablaze with light, and a plentiful supper covered the table.

"Captain Monaldo, why tempt us so?" asked the old Jew, feebly. "You know the sight of food only makes our situation harder to bear. Have mercy! I—"

He paused, his eyes resting upon Syria, who gazed upon the food with longing, wistful eyes.

"I yield!" he faltered, unable to bear the sight. "Give us food, and free us! You shall have the money!"

"Eat!" said Juan, in a choking voice. "But be careful! Do not eat too much!"

He poured out a glass of wine, and held it to the maiden's lips, his eyes filling with tears as he saw how eagerly she grasped it, that not a drop might be lost.

When she had drunk it, a warm glow came back to her feeble frame, and a more natural light to her sweet eyes.

Carving a small piece of broiled bird for her, and cutting it into small bits, Juan gave it to her, and then gave Ben Israel wine and food.

"There! there! you've eaten enough!" declared Juan, when he beheld their returning strength. "Do you feel better?"

"Yes," groaned Ben Israel. "If we had had but courage to die, Syria! But it was so hard to see you starve!"

Juan turned away to conceal his emotion, and looked the door that led into the passage.

The father and daughter looked at each other with a terrified gaze.

"Fear not, Syria! Fear not, Ben Israel!" said Juan, standing before them. "See!"

He twitched off his beard, moustache, and hair, and, despite his paint and assumed portliness, stood before them—his grave, handsome self!

"Juan!" cried the maiden, with dilating eyes, and wild expression, as she sprang forward, and was clasped to his breast.

"Juan!" repeated Ben Israel, feebly. "Juan here?"

"Yes, here, my friend," replied Juan. "Here to save you!"

"To save us? Thank God! He has heard my prayers," cried the Jew, leaping to his feet. "But how did you get in here? Count Garcia threatened that Monaldo would treat us cruelly on his return! He may be here at any moment—"

"Monaldo and Count Garcia are one!" responded Juan, smoothing the glossy tresses on the head that nestled in his breast. "And," he added, "that one is bound and stowed away in a thicket not far from here!"

Syria and her father were overwhelmed with surprise.

"He was skillfully disguised," went on Juan, "but I found him out. He is not likely to be discovered before morning, and by that time we must be far away. Have faith in me, and take courage. I will pack this little basket with food and drink, and, as soon as you are able, we will set out."

"But we shall be seen," objected the Jew.

"Then I shall rely upon my disguise," returned the young sword-maker, fastening on his false hair. "Now sit down, both of you, and recover your usual calmness, while I pack the basket."

They obeyed him, and the basket was soon packed. Juan then administered more wine to both Syria and her father, who were now quite themselves.

"Are you ready now?" he asked.

They assented, and Ben Israel stepped into the little antechamber, opened the door the lock of which Rafael had picked, and whispered:

"Have they left you for the night?"

"Yes."

"Then come out here."

"Ben Israel," he cried, with a palling cheek, "why betray me to Monaldo? You have consented to his terms."

"Juan Montes, this is Rafael Ezra, the betrothed of my daughter," said the old man, solemnly. "Rafael, this is not Monaldo, but the young sword-maker of whom I spoke to you."

With a look of doubt still lingering on his face, Rafael grasped Juan's hand; but it was not till Juan's presence had been explained, that he breathed freely and felt at ease.

And then the two men regarded each other for a moment in silence—the handsome, graceful young Spaniard, loving and beloved by Syria, and the man to whom her hand was pledged.

"I thought you told me he was very handsome, Syria?" whispered Rafael, aside. "His eyes, I own, are splendid—"

"Wait till he is freed from his disguise," returned Syria, endeavouring to veil the look of love she gave Juan.

"Are you going with us, Don Rafael?" inquired our hero. "If so, we had better start. The longer time we can put between us and the pursuit of the brigands, the better."

Syria put on her hood and cloak and declared herself ready.

"We cannot go through the main cavern," continued Juan, "for we shall certainly be stopped. The

only course that remains to us is to discover the other outlet."

He gave the basket to Rafael, and took the torches and lamp, and distributed them between the three men; then they passed noiselessly into the passage, and Juan locked the door behind them.

He then took charge of the basket himself, and, holding his torch high above his head, to enable him to see the way, he led the little party deeper and deeper into the recesses of the rocks.

How dark and sepulchral they seemed!

The rocky uneven walls enclosing them like a great stone coffin, the darkness stretching out behind and before, the flaring, smoking torches, and the haggard fugitives, all made up a strange picture.

Rafael supported the feeble steps of Ben Israel, and the maiden went on before them, one of her little hands clasped trustfully in Juan's.

The passage soon widened abruptly, and they found themselves in a huge dome-shaped room, where the light of their torches was reflected back from snowy walls and glittering stalactites.

"What a mighty convulsion of nature was necessary to produce this cave!" said Juan, in a wondering tone. "There are great many underground mysteries that we know nothing about, Syria!"

The sound of his voice came back to him in ringing echoes, and his words seemed to be repeated by hundreds of mocking voices, so that, startled and half-alarmed, they hastened through the cave to the only passage opening beyond it.

And here the way grew very narrow, seeming but a mere fissure, and at times they could only inch through it in single file.

"How damp the air grows!" suddenly cried Syria. "Oh, be careful!"

They paused on hearing her caution, and found themselves on the brink of a basin that looked like an immense punch bowl filled with black and stagnant water.

Passing this, and emerging from the little passage beyond, they came upon a tinkling stream that sag away musically to itself in the darkness and loneliness of that underground place.

Looking around him, Juan perceived that there was no further possible outlet, save by this subterranean river, and a moment's search revealed several boats moored to jutting points of the surrounding rock.

"These show me that we are on the right track," he said. "We must be cautious, for we may come upon the guard at any moment!"

He unfastened one of the boats, leaped into it, and then rowed very close, taking in Syria, her father, and lastly Rafael.

"Hold the torches while I row, Don Rafael," he said, seizing the oars. "There is quite a current here to assist me!"

The boat glided swiftly through the water, and on they went, Juan listening intently for any sound of a guard. The shadows closed in around them and the small spot illuminated by their dying torches, but every moment brought them new hope and energy.

Rafael begged to take his place at the oar, but Juan would not consent.

"I have not been shut up as you have," he said. "Do you hear that noise?" he added, suddenly. "It is the sound of a waterfall!"

The statement was speedily proved by their coming upon a heavy rush of waters that whirled the boat round like a feather; and the next moment they were borne over a foaming fall, and wondering at their escape.

And now the boat swept on down the current without the aid of an oar, and a dull green light began to enter the cavern.

"It is the light of the outer world," cried Syria, in a burst of irrepressible joy. "We are almost free."

The light deepened, the torches were thrown overboard, the lamp stowed away, and they approached a narrow opening, so low that all were obliged to crouch in the bottom of the boat when they went through, and then they were floating, in open starlight, upon a deep creek.

They looked upward, around them, and took in, in one deep inspiration, the beauty, the freshness, and the freedom of the scene.

"Who comes there?" asked a voice, and then they beheld an armed man seated upon the bank. "Ah, it's you, captain?"

"Yes, it's me," returned Juan, quietly. "I have decided to free my prisoners, seeing there's nothing to be got out of them, and I didn't wish the boys to see me doing it, as I've boasted about the money I shall get from them. Just keep quiet about it." And he tossed him a gold piece.

The man nodded, and Juan landed with his companions upon the grassy shore.

"We are at the foot of the mountains," he said, when he had taken his bearings. "The horses are at no great distance, and we will mount and away."

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They passed around the foot of the mountain. Juan caught the best four horses he could find; they mounted, and rode swiftly away, soon gaining the road.

"And now I must make a brief visit to the count, as I promised," Juan said. "Will you come with me?"

They assented, and hastened to the spot where Count Garcia had been left.

He lay there, bound and helpless, staring up through the thicket at the blue and starlit sky, his face convulsed with rage.

He fairly gnashed his teeth when Juan and Syria looked in upon him.

"I have rescued her, you see," said our hero, grimly. "We are now about to leave you, so I don't mind telling you that Ben Israel and Rafael Ezra accompany us."

The count glared an awful look of hatred upon him.

"For fear you may not be found in the morning," continued Juan, "I shall leave you out in the open ground, so that some one may see you."

He drew him out, exchanged garments again, laid his beard and wig beside him, and then, after giving him a few words of earnest admonition, left him, and they all remounted and rode away, leaving the count smoldering with vengeance upon them.

When they had fairly left the scene of their troubles behind them, the rescued trio thanked Juan for his grateful gratitude and love, and detailed how they had fallen into Monaldi's hands, and their hopes and plans for the future.

When morning came, they halted for a few hours to rest, and then resumed their journey. On the morning of the third day they approached the city of Valencia, which then, as now, was situated upon the river Guadalquivir, about four miles from the sea. It was in the shape of a circular shape, surrounded by a wall thirty feet high and ten feet thick, with a road upon its summit for mounted guards to traverse.

The city was entered by eight gates, several of which were very picturesque. The river was crossed by five handsome bridges, and the suburbs outside the city presented a pleasant contrast to the narrow and crooked streets and high and gloomy houses within.

As the eyes of the travellers rested upon this scene, lighted up by the morning sun, different thoughts came to their hearts. To Ben Israel and Rafael it looked like an ark of refuge, to Juan and Syria it brought pangs of grief that were worse than the strokes of death. During their brief journey, despite their resolutions, their hearts had become more firmly knit to each other, and they both felt that their love now thoroughly permeated their being.

They rode through one of the gates and entered the narrow streets of the city, proceeding directly to a inn, where they rested and refreshed themselves, and then set out to look for a vessel in which to take passage from the country.

They found that Valencia was filled with Jews, who had fled from all parts of Spain, driven from their homes by the cruel edicts of Ferdinand and Isabella, and were all anxiously looking for some means of escape from the land.

There were at that period eight hundred thousand Jews in Spain.

On searching they found a vessel, the Santa Maria, but already fully laden with the unhappy persecuted race; yet the captain, a coarse, burly man, was ready to bargain for more.

"What will you give for the passage of three?" he demanded of Ben Israel.

In answer, Syria laid her costly jewels in his hands.

"How came you to have these?" he then asked, examining them. "The edict expressly forbids the carrying away of gold or jewels, and the Government offers bills of exchange for them. But these rascally Jews," he added, "have more than half of them paid in jewels! I suppose I ought to confiscate them. But if you can sleep on deck, you may come aboard. The ship is over-crowded, and we leave to-night."

This being the only ship sailing from Valencia, and her destination being Beyrout, they instantly secured their passage, and remained on board while Juan went ashore.

He soon returned with blankets, a few articles of clothing, and supplies of provisions for the voyage; the captain declining to supply food for his passengers. He remained with them as long as he could, but at length, warned by a sailor to take his departure, he clasped Syria in an agonised embrace, was taken to Ben Israel's heart, clasped hands with Rafael Ezra, and went ashore.

And then orders were given, the anchor lifted, the sails filled, and in the crowd of people that thronged the decks of the Santa Maria, Juan easily distinguished the child-like form and royal beauty of the maiden he loved.

And Syria, supported by her father's arms looked shorewards, exchanging a farewell glance with her lover, while the ship rapidly widened the distance between them.

(To be continued.)

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.,

Author of "The Jewit," "The Prelate," "Minnegrey," &c.

CHAPTER CXL.

A tale to stir the blood of generous youth—
To rive the heart—to call forth deeds, not tears.

Old Play.

"My dear sir, you are agitated!" observed our hero.

"It is with joy—with gratitude!" replied Mr. Brindley. "The prayers of a wronged and suffering mother's heart have not been breathed in vain: the child has become a man, strong in energies, and truth, and honour. But I wander," he added; "bear with me—pray bear with me!"

"I had a niece," continued the speaker, after a pause—"a gentle, simple girl—pure as the heart's first impulse—innocent as nature's child! She had a mind richer even than the beauty of her features—more precious than the wealth inherited from an avaricious father, who made his gold a god; but he was rightly served—he was punished where he had sinned!"

"Pray proceed, sir," said his godson; "you have interested me!"

"This being so richly endowed," resumed the old man, "became the victim of a villain!"

"Victim?" exclaimed his hearer, turning deadly pale; for, despite the assurance of Captain Vernon, the suspicion which had tortured him returned. "What have I to learn?"

"The victim!" repeated the goldsmith; "not in the common acceptance of the word. He did not seduce her—she was too pure for that! Although years her senior, by affected generosity he won her heart—made himself, by legal ties, the master of her destiny and fortune—all his base, sordid spirit cared for. His object gained, he trampled on the heart he could not comprehend or value—outraged her woman's pride and nature—stripped her, by slow degrees, of every shilling—lavished her wealth upon a mistress!"

"He was a villain!" said our hero, deeply moved. "How did she endure her bitter destiny?"

"With patience!" repeated the narrator; "for she had known sorrow from her youth—its tears had strengthened her; with hope—for she was a mother—and a mother's love sustained her! Well, this—this man—I will not again designate him by a harsher name—would have degraded the pure innocent being he had wronged, by making her the companion, the associate of his mistress! She resisted! By fiend-like art—which I have never yet been able to unravel—he caused her to be pronounced insane—separated her from her son, the world, and all who loved her!"

"Horrible! Can there be such a monster?"

"You doubt it?" observed the old man, mournfully. "I sometimes ask myself if it be true. Then it was that she became mad. Madness!" he added, "was mercy to what she had endured! I was absent from England at the time. When I returned I found my niece, my gentle Alice—whose love to me was as a child's—declared a lunatic; her boy—my godson—the only pledge of her ill-starred union, confined to the care of the abandoned woman whose fatal influence over his guilty father had caused such hopeless misery, to be corrupted heart and mind—reared in vice and contamination!"

"Did you not appeal to the law?" demanded the astonished and indignant hearer.

"I did!" said Mr. Brindley, "but it was powerless to aid me! True, I was rich, and should have regarded the loss of my fortune as trivial in the balance, compared with my niece's and her child's safety. The law was on the husband's side—justice alone on mine! The rest is soon told: the devoted zeal of one who had known Alice from her youth prompted him to an undertaking which might have caused his ruin, had he been detected! He stole the boy—fled with him from London—placed him in security—baffled the search of his unnatural father—the fury of the disappointed mistress! Do you blame him?"

"Blame him!" exclaimed Fred; "it was a holy deed—a deed for man to honour, heaven to smile upon!"

"I am glad you think so!" observed the goldsmith, emphatically. "True, it deprived the child for years of a vain rank—but strengthened him in virtue, tempered him in manhood's noblest qualities—honour, courage, truth—all that he who watched over him could desire—all that his wretched mother's heart—had reason been restored to her—could have wished!"

The young lieutenant began to feel bewildered—

strange doubts and surmises struggled in his breast! Wild and improbable as the suspicion at first appeared to him, he asked himself at last if he was the son of the much-wronged Alice.

"Answer me!" he faltered; "oh, sir, in pity answer me! This story, which has harrowed my feelings but to listen to—am I not interested, connected with it? You said but now that it was the last time you should address me by the name of Fred?"

"I did."

"What name, then, am I to bear?"

"Digby Viscount Moretown—the name of your unnatural father!"

It is unnecessary to pursue the chain of events which our readers are already so well acquainted with any further. The astonished lover of Annie Vernon comprehended at last why her father had given only a conditional assent to his suit—as if the accession of rank and wealth could change his heart. But his chief thought was of his mother, her sufferings, and trials.

"Thank heaven!" he exclaimed, "I have returned a man, with the strength as well as heart to protect her! No human law can bar my right—nature proclaims it with resistless force! Where is she? Tell me, my dear, kind, good, generous benefactor! Each moment of delay reproaches me with the neglect of duty! I burn with impatience to tear her from the hands of her oppressors—to clasp her to my heart—whisper in her ears the name of son! She will know me," he added; "I feel assured that she will know me."

His uncle shook his head despondingly, so perfectly was he convinced that the madness of his niece was hopeless; whether produced by long seclusion or means yet more detestable, he knew not.

"I have but one more duty," he said, "to perform, and then my painful task is ended. This packet, a few years since, came into my possession—it were needless to recount at such a moment how. It is addressed to you, in the handwriting of the countess."

Digby—we must for the future designate him by that name—trembled as he extended his hand to receive it, and pressed it reverentially to his lips.

"I will leave you," continued the old man, rising to quit the apartment; "leave you to commune with your own heart, your mother's wishes—her confidence is sacred!"

It was some time before the bewildered son of the unhappy Alice found sufficient nerve to break the seal. He sat for awhile regarding the packet—his eyes rivetted on the address—

"To be opened only by my son—the Hon. Digby Moretown."

Occasionally he asked himself, if he were not in a dream—if the tale he had just heard was not the creation of his distempered imagination—so wild and so incredible did it appear. That he should have met his brother—been hated, persecuted by him—have been so wonderfully preserved. No wonder that he doubted.

He broke the seal at last. The first paper he opened was the testament of Nicholas Arden, the old miser—his grandfather—bequeathing all his wealth to the eldest son of Alice.

The eyes of the heir glanced over the contents of the will with indifference; the letter of his mother was far more precious to him. If he felt elated at the acquisition of fortune, it was that it afforded him the means of punishing his unnatural parent.

He retired with the packet to his own chamber. There, in the silence of the night, he perused the outpourings of his mother's love—the sad story of her wrongs and tears.

When he descended the following morning, it was with a countenance stern and fixed. Providence had placed the glaive of human justice in his hand, and he resolved its weight should fall upon the guilty.

No sooner, however, did he behold his aged relative than his brow relaxed, and his manner became gentle and affectionate as a child's.

"You must give me your advice, my dear sir, how to proceed in the affair of the will."

"Will, my lord! What will?" demanded the old man.

"Call me Digby!" said his godson, taking him by the hand; "any other name would sound harshly from your lips! Is it possible," he continued, "that you were ignorant of the contents of the packet you delivered to me last night?"

"Quite!" replied the goldsmith, who at once related how Goliath became possessed of it. "I have often," he added, "felt tempted to break the seal—but resisted the impulse."

The viscount placed before the speaker the testament of his grandfather. As he perused it the eyes of Mr. Brindley sparkled with joy.

"This is, indeed, most fortunate," he observed; "and will compel the earl to accept any conditions you choose to dictate! The discovery of this document has literally beggared him—his life-interest in

the estates—which are strictly entailed—would not pay off half the debts he owes."

"Is it even so?" exclaimed his godson; "then, indeed, is he most righteously punished! But my first act must be to procure the liberation of my mother! I cannot wait for forms or legal proof—my heart is consuming in its own impatience! These papers I will leave with you. Dick Vernon and I shall start this very day for Moretown Abbey!"

"Be careful, my dear boy. You know not what danger you may incur."

"Danger!" repeated his lordship, in a tone of contempt; "oh, were this heartless man—this destroyer, tyrant—any but the author of my being, you should see how little danger would appal me! I repeat it—we shall leave London to-night."

"You are right, my lord!" observed Goliath, who overheard the last words of the speaker as he entered the room; "not a moment is to be lost. Pray heaven it prove not too late!"

"What mean you?"

"Nothing—nothing, my lord! That is, nothing particular!" replied the constant friend of Alice, glancing at the same time towards his partner, to intimate that he feared to agitate the old man by revealing what he had to say before him.

Digby understood him, and followed him from the room. After a brief communication, he returned, accompanied by Dick Vernon, who bade a hasty adieu to his godfather, and stepped with his companion into the chaise which his friend had ordered.

"Where are we going?" demanded Dick, who as yet had not the least suspicion of the discovery which had taken place.

"To perform an act of justice!" replied his companion; "where the voice of duty and affection calls me—to prevent a fearful crime, or terribly avenge it!"

"Mad," muttered Dick, with a look of astonishment; "quite mad! This visit to London has turned his brain!"

Before they had reached their journey's end—and they travelled day and night to accomplish it—the speaker was convinced that his friend was, to say the least of it—quite as sane as himself.

CHAPTER CXII

The gathering clouds proclaim a coming storm.
Old Play.

As our readers are aware, the Earl of Moretown had now a double motive for visiting his tenantry—ambition and vanity. The Garter—the honour for which he had plotted, intrigued, and circumvented—appeared within his reach: it was promised him by the cabinet, in the event of his returning their nominees—and he resolved to use every means in his power to comply with the conditions.

"I expect a large party!" he said, as he entered the boudoir of Athalie, the morning after their arrival at the abbey. "My brother-in-law, the Duke of Ayrton, will be my guest on his way to Scotland."

"Who else, my lord?" inquired his mistress.

"Political friends, chiefly," replied her dupe; "humdrum squires, parsons, and county magistrates—men whom I must cajole or flatter; it will be a dull affair for you, no doubt," he added; "but you can have your own set."

"Julia, my niece?"

His lordship nodded assent.

"And her affianced husband?" continued the syren, forcing a smile; "he is a young man of great promise: any one who knows him pronounces him to be monstrously clever!"

"I detest clever people!" was the response of the owner of Moretown Abbey; "there is nothing more fatiguing than to listen to them: they keep the attention of their listeners, as well as their own imagination, continually on the stretch! But do as you please," he added, and I shall be content."

"I see how it is," replied the Frenchwoman. "So that your own ends are answered, you care little for my wishes or feelings."

"You wrong me—by heaven, you wrong me!" interrupted the peer. "Have I not shown throughout our attachment the utmost deference and desire to please you?"

The lady shrugged her shoulders.

"Athalie," said the earl, in a more serious tone, "this is no time to trifle. I cannot conceal from myself—however I may from my friends, that my influence in the county is shaken. In this crisis I must depend on you."

"On me, my lord?"

"I must throw the abbey open to my friends, invite those who are wavering as well as the few who remain faithful in their allegiance to me. Exert all your fascination—every talent which you possess—to captivate and please. To be foiled at the present moment would be gall and wormwood to me."

"What would it be to me, my lord?" replied the female fiend. "Not less humiliating to see the son of

the woman who won you from me—who humbled and scorned me—No, no!" she added, passionately. "It has not come to that yet."

"But it will!"

"Not whilst I live! heart and soul I devote myself to the cause! I will go amongst your tenants and their wives—institute, cajole, threaten, and smile by turns—prove myself a very Proteus in your cause! But I must have money! I know your countrymen too well to hope for success without the sinews of war! Bribery may do much."

"You are my guardian angel!" exclaimed the earl, kissing her hand with unusual gallantry; "and money—or the sinews of war, as you term it—shall be placed at your disposal, at any sacrifice."

The Duke of Ayrton arrived at the abbey two days sooner than his host expected him.

His grace was one of those cool, cautious men, who never compromise—never do anything rashly; hence his refusal to permit the nomination of his relative to the vacant Garter to appear in the *Gazette* till after the elections. His ostensible reason was, that whilst the favoured candidate for the honour was unknown, it secured the fidelity of certain allies who might be wavering.

"Well, Godfrey!" he said, extending his hand to his brother-in-law; "how stand the chances?"

"Chances!" repeated his lordship; "I do not understand you! What chances?"

"Why, of the election, to be sure!" was the reply. "Grey writes me word that notices have been served upon them, in the name of your son, or some person who calls himself his trustee—your old friend the goldsmith, I presume—forbidding them to pay rent to you or your agents!"

"Infamous!" exclaimed the earl, flushed with passion; "your grace is well aware that I have no son! My poor boy fell gloriously, serving his country, on board the *Revenge*."

"Your eldest son, truly!" observed his visitor; "it is not to him that my correspondent alludes, but to his brother—the boy whom you so mysteriously lost just after the countess was pronounced to be insane."

"Ridiculous!" said the unnatural parent; "he is doubtless dead; or, if living, inherits his mother's madness."

The heartless man affected to treat the intelligence lightly; but his noble relative was not to be deceived.

"Godfrey," he replied, "there is no time to lose. That is if you have any wish to guard your interests, which are seriously shaken! It matters very little whether the affair turns out to be a ruse of some political enemy or really a question of right to the Riddle property—the effect is still the same! You remember," he added, "that the promise of the Garter was conditional upon success?"

"Your grace need not remind me of it," answered his lordship, petulantly; "I am perfectly aware how much and how little we usually owe to private friendship."

"A sensible observation, Godfrey," said the minister; "in politics there is no friendship. A party is a body without kindred!"

"Or memory," interrupted the peer.

His grace shrugged his shoulders, and observed that he would retire to his room to dress. He had no wish to continue a conversation which could only lead to unpleasant results.

His noble relative felt, as he quitted him, a mingled sentiment of envy and hatred.

"My tenants are ready to rebel against me!" he observed, in a confidential conversation with the Frenchwoman.

"The fault of your lordship's indulgence!" observed Athalie, disdainfully. "You should never have granted a single lease—then the ungrateful wretches would not have dared to feel, think, or vote but as you directed them."

This was perhaps the more galling because it was true, and that the speaker was in some measure the cause of it.

The farmers had generally obtained their leases on the payment of large fines, rendered necessary by the extravagance of the Frenchwoman—for, notwithstanding the princely fortune he had received with his countess, the Earl of Moretown was comparatively a poor man.

But notwithstanding his poverty, he contrived to raise, by the assistance of an attorney at Newcastle, a considerable sum—as a security for which he pledged the rents of Moretown for the next twelve months—and armed with the sinews of war, as Athalie termed it, prepared in earnest for the coming contest.

His first step was to visit his tenants on the Riddle estate. To his chagrin, he found that the indefatigable Mr. Jolland had been beforehand with him. Many had already promised their votes to his opponents.

The next was to issue invitations to the clergy and smaller landed proprietors, to a grand party to be given at the abbey.

It was to take place five days before the election.

CHAPTER CXIII

He that truly loves,
Burns out the day in idle phantasies;
And when the lamb, bleating, doth bid good night
Unto the closing day, then tears begin
To keep quick time unto the owl, whose voice
Shrieks like the hellman's in the lover's ear.
Middleton.

THE meeting between Lady Sinclair and Bell Hacketon, on the arrival of the latter in London, was, as our readers may imagine, affectionate in the extreme. They wept and smiled in turns. Long companionship in captivity and misfortune had made them more than friends—they loved each other as sisters.

The joy of little Outhbert at once more beholding his playfellow, nurse, instructress—for Bell had been all these to him—was perfectly uproarious. He sprang into her arms, laughing, crying, and kissing her by turns.

"Outhbert is so happy!" he said; "he has two mamma's now."

"You have not forgotten me?" she observed.

The child looked thoughtfully into her features for a few moments, then threw his little arms around her neck, and, bursting into tears, hid his face upon her bosom.

"Indeed he has not!" replied his mother; "for days after our separation he was inconsolable. Morn and evening in his prayers he remembered you."

Between such friends there was no reserve, except upon the subject of Frank. From a feeling of delicacy, Bell did not choose to allude to him, lest it should be supposed she wished to remind Lady Sinclair of the many sacrifices he had made for her, and the services he had rendered. On every other point she was candid and open as her own generous heart—told Margaret not only of her engagement with Dr. Tytler, but confessed that the day was named for her marriage.

"May you be happy!" exclaimed her ladyship, kissing her affectionately; "as happy as you deserve to be. The mother who bore you," she added, "could wish you no brighter destiny. Have you nothing more to say to me?"

"No."

"No message—no word from your brother?"

"None."

"I must not be so forgetful!" observed Margaret; "that which is generosity in the creditor becomes dishonesty in the debtor. The affection and confidence of my late husband have given me the means of paying every debt save the one which money cannot cancel—the debt of gratitude. Think you," she continued, "I would permit either Frank or yourself to sacrifice your little fortune for me?"

"I have made no sacrifice," replied Bell; "my share in the humble inheritance of our family remains untouched. But were it otherwise," she added, "how willingly, how cheerfully would I have parted with it for you and your dear boy."

The ice once broken, they continued to converse freely on the subject of Frank.

"It is in vain," said his sister, "that I point out to him daily—nay, almost hourly—the folly of the passion which consumes him—my deep conviction that you will never love again! He listens—admits that he feels his love is hopeless; yet continues to dream on."

The eyes of Lady Sinclair sank at the words of the speaker, and a very faint blush suffused her cheek.

"She is angry," thought her visitor, "at Frank's infatuation."

Was she right in her surmise?

Who can say? The greatest enigma in nature is the heart of a woman—especially when she happens to be a widow.

"I should not have named him," she continued, "had you not questioned me—and yet my heart was full of anxiety on his account."

"Is his health then so broken?" inquired Lady Sinclair, anxiously. "Alas! he promised me, when last I saw him, to struggle with this fatal passion—to live for you and for his friends."

"He has struggled!" observed Bell. "It is not for his body's health I fear—for although much changed, Tytler assures me that he is out of danger from his wound; it is his mind's disease—the morbid sensibility which, like a canker, corrodes the very heart! He avoids even me—appears fearful lest I should question him—and when I allude to his residing with me after my marriage and lay out plans for the future, he turns aside like one for whom time knows not the word! He will leave me!" she added, bursting into tears; "me and his country—for ever! The dread haunts me—alloys my present happiness! Vainly he seeks to conceal his purpose—a sister's love is not to be deceived."

"And I am the cause of this misery!" murmured Margaret, in accents of bitter self-reproach; "my evil destiny pursues me! I am doomed to blight

NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE.—No one will contend that there are no crimes committed by married men. Facts would look such an assertion out of countenance. But it may be said with truth that there are very few crimes committed by married men compared with the number committed by those who are unmarried. Whatever faults Voltaire may have had, he certainly showed himself a man of sense when he said, "The more married men you have, the fewer crimes there will be." Marriage renders a man more virtuous and more wise." An unmarried man is but half of a perfect being, and it requires the other half to make things right; and it cannot be expected that in this imperfect state he can keep the straight path of rectitude any more than a boat with one oar, or a bird with one wing, can keep a straight course. In nine cases out of ten, where married men become drunkards, or where they commit crimes against the peace of the community, the foundation of these acts was laid while in a single state, or where the wife is, as sometimes the case, an unsuitable match. Marriage changes the whole current of a man's feelings, and gives him a centre for his thoughts, his affections, and his acts. Here is a home for the entire

But, after the Helmet, she washes her hands of the whole affair; and while this frightful snail-shell is growing more and more common, she sends you her designs, intentions, and indignation, to record what might have been, and so dismisses the subject from her thoughts for ever.—*Punch*.

ASTRONOMICAL NOTICES FOR 1865.

In addition to the customary Solar and Lunar disturbances, the following observations may be expected to happen during the year, all visible to the nude eye:—

The present Parliament will be eclipsed on the eve of a new one.

Reform will be eclipsed, to re-appear with its Bright Satellite. (Some observers think this is all moonshine.)

Earl Russell will be eclipsed by Viscount Amberley (unless there should be an eclipse of the Son, visible at Leeds.)

In November Lord Mayor Stormes Hale will be eclipsed by his successor. (Only visible in the City. Smoked glass to be had of Messrs. Gog and Magog.) Christy's Minstrels will be left in darkness. Davenport Brothers will be eclipsed by some other humbugs.—*Punch*.

BY THE OVERLAND ROUTE.—It is not generally known that the country in India, about which there was some obscurity in the Queen's Speech, is remarkable for its Bhootanical Gardens.—*Punch*.

A TRIFLE FROM SUTHERLANDSHIRE.—Why was the Garter given to the Duke of Fire-Engines? To keep up his hose.—*Punch*.

EXPRESS FROM THE KITCHEN.—Mary thanks the Milkman for his Valentine. She knew it was from him, because it was written on the best cream-laid. Her feelings tally with his.—*Punch*.

GARDENING NOTES.

Very early celery is known among horticulturists as "celerity."

Greek roots should not be planted in French beds, or they will not come up to the scratch of the rake.

Spring onions ought not to come up in summer; ought 'em? or in winter.

Dog-roses may be identified by the bark on their bough-wows.

By going to a market-gardener you can obtain lilies of any valley—from twopence upwards.

In order to make your turnips come up well, you should sprinkle small change over them, on the principle that you must invariably pay what you hoe.

You will not be likely to raise a valuable crop by planting your foot in your fields, although the corn may be remarkable for size.

Always insist on your gardeners wearing boots.

THE INDIAN DEBT.—A return from the India-office was printed recently of the debt chargeable on the India revenues, to the latest date to which the return can be made out—viz., in England to December 31, 1864, and in India to April 30, 1863. The total Indian debt amounted to 87,017,929*l*. distributed as follows:—Government of India, 76,465,572*l*; Bengal, 2,418,827*l*; North Western Provinces, 1,086,399*l*; Punjab, 1,043,632*l*; Madras, 2,809,753*l*; and Bombay, 3,694,306*l*. The total debt in England was 28,509,776*l*. This return is exclusive of the charge, under the Act 3rd and 4th of William IV., cap. 85, of the dividend at the rate of 10*l*. 10*s*. per cent. per annum on the sum of 6,000,000*l*. capital stock of the East India Company. There are also contingent liabilities in respect of interest guaranteed Indian railway and other companies, and of repayments to them of capital expended; but no estimate, it is stated in the return, can be formed of these liabilities.

THE NAVY ESTIMATES FOR THE YEAR 1890-91.
The net decrease, as compared with last year, is 816,427*l.*, the total amount required being 10,892,224*l.*, against 10,708,651*l.* It should be stated, however, that the sum thus voted last year includes the votes in the supplementary estimate for increasing the full pay and for the extension of naval retirement of the officers of the Navy, amounting to 61,041*l.*, and the supplementary estimate for purchase and completion of the *El Tousson* and *El Monassar*, iron-clad ships, amounting to 220,000*l.* The items of decrease are as follow:—
Coastguard service, &c., 16,929*l.*; scientific branch, 1,294*l.*; her Majesty's establishments at home, 198*l.*; ditto abroad, 894*l.*; wages to artificers in home establishments, 116,509*l.*; section 1 in naval stores, Storekeeper-General of the Navy, 29,528*l.*; section 2, Comptroller of the Navy, 817,512*l.*; and half-pay, &c., to officers of the Navy and Royal Marines, 5,870*l.* On the other hand the wages to seamen and marines

are increased ditto, 21,575
abroad, 3,388
and medical
1,605; military
civil pensions
amount for
payments
which reduce
to 10,152,908
18,692,792;
officers, petty
coming year
are also 7,000
service, again
—viz., 8,000
on shore, but
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990, leaving
service 69,715
building, together
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Our COLONIAL
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increased by 15,093*l*.; victuals and clothing for 21,575*l*.; Admiralty Office, 7,352*l*.; artificers abroad, 3,380*l*.; new works, &c., 83,587*l*.; medicines and medical stores, 450*l*.; miscellaneous services, 3,005*l*.; military pensions and allowances, 17,610*l*.; civil pensions and allowances, 14,050*l*. The estimated amount for the coming year of extra receipts and payments to be paid to the exchequer is 239,319*l*, which reduces the net amount of the navy estimates to 10,162,906*l*, against the net amount last year of 10,087,792*l*. With regard to numbers, the number of officers, petty officers, and seamen to be voted for the coming year is 38,000, against 38,500 last year. There are also 7,000 boys; and 7,000 men in the coastguard service, against 7,500 last year, making the total 53,000 against 53,000. The marines are in all 17,900—viz., 8,000 for service afloat, and 9,900 for service on shore, being 1,000 less than in 1864-5. The civilians for the coastguard service are 750 against 800, leaving the total force in the fleet and coastguard service 69,750, against 71,950 last year.—A return has been published of the number of steam-ships afloat and building, together with the number of effective sailing-ships, on the 1st of the present month. The total of steam-ships afloat is 445—being 857 screw and 88 paddle; 26 screw-ships are building; 69 effective sailing-ships are afloat; making the total of steam and sailing-ships 540. The building of three line-of-battle ships, one corvette, four gun-vessels, and four gun-boats is suspended.

OUR COLONIAL FISHERIES.—It may interest our readers to know the great extent of the colonial fisheries, the population (omitting Canada West) being about two and a quarter millions; the annual returns giving more than one pound's worth of fish exported per head. The quantities cured in 1860 were (not including Canada or Labrador)—dried cod, 1,497,697 quintals; mackerel, 131,184 barrels; shad, 7,649 barrels; herrings, 357,379 barrels; herrings, dried, 25,557 boxes; slowfish, 12,595 barrels; salmon, 5,405 tonnes; smoked salmon, 2,738 tonnes. While the exports of fish from Great Britain were 878,000*l*. in 1862, those from Ireland were under 3,000*l*., while we imported 80,000*l*. worth of herrings. If the fishery commissioners would give returns similar to those made in the colonies, we could form some opinion as to the value and position of the trade, but now we are in the dark. It is hoped that the fish-curing of Norway, Denmark, the United States, France, and our colonies, will be represented at our National Exhibition. There is a mine of wealth in the sea. Our people do not require fixity of tenure or a landlord and a tenant bill to catch them, but only industry. The merchants, shopkeepers, and farmers have money enough if they would only imitate the Cornishmen and Scotch. Returns might be annually made to Parliament of the quantities of the various kinds of fish cured, as well as the value of those saved fresh.—*Sligo Independent*.

THE DUCAL HOUSE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

"The reluctance which the Percy blood has always shown to flow in other than female veins is very remarkable. If at any time more male births have taken place than have barely sufficed to keep up the descent of the title from father to son, they have usually proved unproductive. Indeed, this has been uniformly the case, with one very recent exception, for more than three centuries, to go no further back. The seventh Earl of Northumberland, who succeeded to the title in 1537, left only four daughters. His brother the eighth Earl, besides three daughters, had eight sons; but all of them died either unmarried or without issue. The ninth Earl left two sons and two daughters; out of the sons only the eldest had issue. The tenth Earl had six daughters, and only one son; and that son, who became the eleventh Earl, left only one child, a daughter. That daughter, the second heiress of her house, besides six daughters, had seven sons; but of them all, only the eldest had issue; and he again left only a daughter, once more destined for the third time to transfer the stream of descent to a new channel. Her eldest son, the second Duke, left two sons; but the elder of the two, who became the third Duke, died without issue; and the present Duke, who is the younger, has no family. Of the second son of the first Duke, however, who succeeded his father as Baron Lovaine, and was afterwards created Earl of Beverley, the posterity in both lines is very numerous."—*Romance of the Peerage*. The body of the late Duke was brought to Northumberland House on the Wednesday evening preceding the interment, from Alnwick Castle. The lying in state was on Thursday and Friday from ten to four, and admission was confined to the personal friends of the deceased, his tenants, and tradespeople. The body of the deceased, on reaching Northumberland House, was placed in the dining-room, which had been prepared as a mortuary chamber, being hung

throughout with black draperies. On Saturday the funeral took place, when the remains of the illustrious nobleman were consigned to their final resting-place in one of the chapels in Westminster Abbey.

MIDNIGHT.

From my turret window leaning,
At the solemn noon of night,
Treasure I the mystic gleaming
Of the harvest fields of light.
Mistily the robes of angels
Float along the milky way,
Folding in their trailing splendours,
Jewels that are dim by day.
And they gather them in silence,
Smiling in the fading light,
While the sobbing winds are moaning
The lost glories of the night.
Then the low-toned bells of midnight
Faintly fall upon my ear,
And the winds are hushed and silent,
With the mysteries gathering near,
And the valleys veil their beauty,
And the mountains far away
Stand uncovered for the bridal
Of to-morrow with to-day.
I can hear the sound of voices,
That I loved in days of yore,
I can see the smiles of faces
That will smile on me no more;
And the far-off Heaven seems nearer,
And God's love beams pure and bright,
From my turret window leaning,
At the solemn noon of night. A. W.

GEMS.

The good wear their years as a crown upon the brow,
The bad as a burden on the back.

In love we grow acquainted because we are already attached; in friendship we must know each other before we love.

The love of a pure and innocent female soul is often the guardian angel that guides a man's steps to the best actions of his life.

While there is so much within us to make open war upon it, it is gratuitous to commence a war with exterior enemies.

The word "home"—lovely to all—is perhaps never felt in the fulness of its peaceful beauty except by the homeless.

Experience teaches, it is true, but she never teaches in time. Each event brings its lesson, and the lesson is remembered, but the same event never occurs again.

Fools measure actions after they are done by events; wise men beforehand, by the rules of reason and right. The former look to the end to judge of the act.

Common conversation is the best mirror to a man's heart and head; and he who can be deceived by a person with whom he has been intimate, discovers a want of discernment that, were it possible, would excuse the imposition.

MISCELLANEOUS.

On the eve of St. Valentine, 530,000 letters were despatched from the General Post-office, being an excess of 230,000 over the ordinary number.

The belief is that the Prince and Princess of Wales will go to Dublin in May, to inaugurate the International Exhibition.

The last words of Cardinal Wiseman to those around him were: "Here I am at last, like a child, going home for the holidays." Simple and touching words of belief and of an affectionate disposition.

It took two hours and a half to transmit the Emperor of the French's speech to London, and to publish it in the world in a second edition. It consisted of 1,710 words.

On Wednesday, the 15th ult., a somewhat severe shock of an earthquake was experienced in the neighbourhood of Furness, North Lancashire. There was a complete upheaval of the earth in some places, and the inhabitants were greatly alarmed.

NAMES OF BOULEVARDS.—A sweeping change has taken place, by an order of the Prefect of the Seine, in the nomenclature of many of the Paris boulevards. In the twelfth arrondissement, the boulevards De la Rapée, Charenton, and Saint Mendé are to be absorbed by the extensions of those of Bercy, Bouilly, and Piepus. Between the twentieth and eleventh arron-

dissements the boulevards Montreuil, Fontarbie, and Des Trois Couronnes are all to be under the denomination of the boulevards De Charonne and Belleville; also the boulevard Menilmontant will absorb the names of boulevards d'Amendiers and d'Aulny, and so throughout a long list.

We hear that the splendid diamond known as the Sancy is for sale at a London jeweller's of eminence. Its price is £40,000. It is not a shop-window treasure, and, we should fancy, would not be shown to every one.

At a carnival supper given by the Princess Doria at Rome, the centre dish was a boiled sturgeon, seven feet long, flanked by two roasted pheasants, with their plumage on and their tails spread like *flabella*.

SIR R. MAYNE has put down crossing-sweepers in London. We hope the police will do the dirty work for the future—they are not unaccustomed to such duties. Sir Richard is pulling down many things upon which the poor live—a noble ambition.

The soundings of the ocean, consequent upon the laying of the Transatlantic cable, have, together with the Pacific Ocean soundings, verified the old assertion that the depth of the sea is equal to the heights of the mountains. The deepest soundings of the Atlantic have been 25,000 feet.

A widow died in the Portsea Island workhouse in the hundredth year of her age, retaining her faculties almost to the last. There is at the present time an inmate of the house in the 104th year of his age, who is hale and hearty, and whose recollection is, indeed, surprising.

The Blackwall Railway has leased its line for 999 years to the Great Eastern railway. We wonder what sort of people will travel on the Blackwall line at the end of the 999th year—what they will think of 1865, of railways themselves—and what conversation will be like in a first-class carriage at that time.

A STATUE of Catherine II. is about to be erected in St. Petersburg. The artist, Mikechize, obtained a medal for the original idea of the work at the last Great Exhibition in London, but he has since considerably modified it. Three years are allowed for the completion of the whole, and the cost is estimated at about 250,000 roubles.

A FEW days ago an attempt was made to photograph the interior of the Blue John Mine, near Castleton, Derbyshire, by means of the magnesium light. It was not wholly successful, because the higher temperature of the mine over that of the outside air caused a condensation of moisture upon a portion of the apparatus which escaped notice. The result is, however, very striking.

THE Prince Imperial is one of the smallest boys of his age who has ever been seen, but must not be judged by his physical height. Taken at his intellectual capacity he is a giant for his age. We hope his papa will teach him to use his giant's strength as a lamb, and tell him what giants may suffer when they meet giants, and what a deal of hard bone-breaking may ensue.

It is said that the Bishop of Malta has prohibited marriage between Roman Catholics and Protestants until the latter have for six months abjured their religion. The report comes that the Bishop of Gibraltar has returned the compliment by forbidding mixed marriages until the Roman Catholic has been six months a Protestant. A very pretty and edifying fight as it stands.

MODESTY

THERE are perhaps few virtues which are so beneficial to society, none so ornamental to woman, as modesty.

The passion for dress, the love of admiration, are perhaps the faults of our fair countrywomen. The pert and forward Miss is pronounced charming, and a style of manners approaching to boldness, is with thousands the standard of taste.

That "woman was made to dignify retreat" is considered, with many, obsolete; and the girl who loves her home, caring for the comfort of her father and brothers, is pitied as a poor creature, who will always be such. No, she had better care for her beau; spend her hours at the mirror and her money at the milliner's.

Now, to such, we should say stop; turn, march double quick to your home duties; or, if incapable of them, ask those who can to have pity on a useless thing, and educate her into that noblest work, a perfect woman.

The wretched love of admiration makes woman selfish and vain, untrue to those noble heart-throbs which ever beat in her bosom. Unnoted by the world, she becomes the brightest jewel of home; and, while she foregoes the homage of folly, she becomes the lasting admiration of the good.

M. J. B.

